The Riddle of Nearer Asia

BY

BASIL MATHEWS

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BASIL MATHEWS

"THE DESOLATE MAGNIFICENCE OF HELIOPOLIS"
Ruin of Temple at Baalbek (Heliopolis), N. Syria; the snows of the Anti-Lebanon in the distance

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WITH A PREFACE BY

VISCOUNT BRYCE

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PREFACE

By Viscount Bryce

The book is admirably calculated to provide the student who wishes to understand the conditions of missionary work in Western Asia with essential facts and illuminating views, stated in the clearest and briefest way. Seldom do we find so much good matter brought together in so small a compass.

The book is opportune, and that not for missionary readers only.

The end of the war ushers in a settlement of the many and large territorial questions which the war has raised; most of us feel, and certainly all of us ought to feel, the need for a more thorough knowledge of the geographical and political phenomena of the Near East than we possess. It is admitted that the Treaty of Peace, and the allotments of territory which it will carry with it, ought not to be left solely to the Governments and their diplomatic advisers, but ought to be submitted to and approved by the public opinion of

the Allied belligerent nations. In order that such a public opinion may have the knowledge required for this purpose, the minds of the peoples must be duly informed and enlightened. They doubtless desire to do justice and to sanction the arrangements most likely to satisfy the sentiment of nationality and to create peace and prosperity where strife and tyranny have hitherto prevailed. But in order to do justice and secure peace, the Allied peoples must comprehend the facts, that is to say the physical and economic conditions of the countries forming the Near East, the faiths, characters and aptitudes of the races inhabiting those countries.

This book, from the skilful and practised hand of Mr. Basil Mathews, is excellently fitted to supply some of these chief and vital facts. He has travelled through the countries with the eye of a keen observer, has studied their history, and has drawn sharp and vivid pictures of each nationality, indicating the salient features of Turks, Arabs, Syrians, as well as of the leading Christian peoples further to the north.

He begins by emphasising the fact that the first thing to be done is to get rid at once and for all of the irredeemable Turk as a ruler over

Christian races. The Turk has been a curse everywhere, just as bad in Asia as in Europe. Islam has its good points, which Mr. Mathews does not seek to conceal. Among the Arabs, and again among the Persians, it was compatible with brilliant intellectual development. Both nations produced some striking poetry, both wrote history well, both showed a gift for metaphysical speculation. But the Turk has never produced anything. He can conquer, but he conquers chiefly to destroy. In administering his conquests he has had to use the brains of other races. He is, as a ruler—it is only as a ruler that I speak of him—brutal, cruel and corrupt,—a savage with a thin veneer of civilised manners. If he is suffered to continue to rule anywhere, it can only be over his co-religionists in the centre of Asia Minor, and with resources too slender to enable him to injure his neighbours.

When the ground has been cleared of the thorns and weeds which grew up under Turkish rule, the day of the native races will dawn. Among them, it is with the Christian races that the future of these countries lies. Theirs is the intelligence and the industry and the spirit of progress needed to restore prosperity. Their moral standards, al-

though practice often falls below theory, are higher than those of Islam. There is also much to be hoped not only from Armenians and Greeks, but also from the Jews, and possibly from the Arabs. Striking characterisation of these latter is given by Mr. Mathews—and his remarks on modern Zionism may be profitably compared with what is said by Mr. Claude Montefiore in his thoughtful book on Hellenism and Judaism.

In his closing chapter our author has concisely and vividly described the change which is passing in the East, and which will now proceed with accelerated rapidity. A hundred years hence the Nearer East of seventy years ago will have wholly vanished. In the twenty-first century it will differ more from what it was in the eighteenth century than its eighteenth century differed from its eighth. Railways and telegraph wires will traverse it everywhere; European and American capital will flow in; European and American science will soon transform and begin to tell powerfully upon the minds of the educated class. They are coming, not like that Arab conquest which swept as a torrent over Mesopotamia and Persia, Syria and Egypt in the seventh century, but with the resistless force of a smooth but steadily rising tide

which penetrates every inlet and creek. Far more complete and pervasive will this change be than that Hellenising process which began for the ancient East with the conquest of Alexander and was completed by the iron sway of Rome.

What will be the outcome of these changes? One result may be pretty clearly expected. The Nearer East, as it gains in security for life, in comfort, in every kind of prosperity, cannot but lose in picturesqueness. Uniformity is steadily spreading over the whole surface of our planet. The contrasts of Orient and Occident that delighted our fathers will soon have become faint; Persia will have been, in every sense, brought nearer to Pennsylvania. But we may hope that the native races will not be so much Europeanised as to lose the specific national quality which each of them has retained for many centuries. More than one of them may still give us an art, a poetry, and perhaps even contributions to speculative thought that will bear a distinctive stamp.

Another change will, if it comes, be much more gradual. Most of those who know either India or the West Asiatic countries have been so struck by the grip which Islam has laid upon those who grow up under it as to make them hold it to be

a permanent and irreducible factor in Eastern life. They may be right. But let us note that the conditions under which the Moslem faith will henceforth have to live will be very different from those which have heretofore protected it. Political power having departed, it will no longer be the religion of the conqueror, and the scorn which the Moslem has felt for the Unbeliever cannot long survive. That scepticism which has already been sapping it among the educated will spread faster and further through all classes. The Young Turks who made the massacres were not fanatics but Prussianised politicians, some practically atheists, very few really Moslems. The social institutions of the Moslem are almost as great a hindrance to progress as the comparative stagnation of his intellectual life, but even they, too, are passing. The life of women in the larger cities is already far freer than of yore. Islam has its good points, and has done much to raise some of the races that have embraced it. But in the Nearer East at least it deserves to decline, and nothing forbids the hope that the decline already discernible may ere long become far more rapid.

PROLOGUE

IN the early spring of 1914, a few months before the outbreak of world-war, an experience in Tarsus brought home to me in a single picture the drama of the East—the wonder of its past, the uneasy slumber of its present and the mystery of its future.

I was standing on the great mound that hides —it is believed—the palace in which Antony entertained Cleopatra, when she came across the Great Sea from Egypt and rowed up the Cydnus river in that gilded barge with its silver oars and silken sails on the visit immortalised by Plutarch and Shakespeare. Looking southward across the Cilician plain and over the old silted-up lake-harbour of Tarsus, I saw caravans of camels swinging along with their burdens from the port of Mersina, just as caravans of camels have come across that plain since the dawn of history.

The camels carried the imagination along those trails over which they have tramped through the centuries—the ancient routes from the Nile across

the Euphrates down the Khyber Pass to the Indus, and across Central Asia to the Yang-tse.[1]

Turning northward, the thin winding ribbon of the river Cydnus recalled the story of Alexander the Great, who came here on his way from the Ægean Sea on that amazing campaign of conquest when he smote Egypt with his right fist, buffeted Persia with his left and set his foot on the plains of India.

From the Cydnus northward, the eye ran across the foothills that rise tier behind tier as buttresses to the Taurus range, up to the white mountain ridge whose snows swell the river. Through that range runs the pass that has few rivals in history—the Cilician Pass, down which Hittite and Assyrian, Greek and Roman, Arab and Turk have marched, through whose shadows Alexander the Great brought his armies and Haroun-al-Raschid led his men, and up whose profound gorges Paul and Silas walked to the cities of the Plateau and on to Troy and Athens.

[1] Sir John Kirk, David Livingstone's companion on the first Zambesi journey, once showed me green Chinese pottery made thousands of years ago, brought by the Arab and his camel from China across Asia to Africa centuries before the birth of Christ, and now used by East African chiefs as ornaments stuck in the interior mud of the walls of their huts.

All the history that has influenced the life of that place streamed like a pageant across the arena of the plain in which the ancient city of Tarsus has survived a score of dynasties. The barbarous majesty that was Nineveh and Babylon, the cruel might of Egypt and of Tyre, the beauty that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome and the undying battle of the Christian Kingdom that was incarnate in Paul—all these overwhelmed the imagination and filled the mind.

> Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
> Abode his Hour or two and went his way.[1]

The pageant faded and the present crowded in. The one note of all that could be seen was decay. The palace of Antony was not merely a ruin, but a ruin lost in a mound of earth. The lake-harbour, into which the ships used to crowd jostling with galleys and merchant-ships from every port in the Great Sea, had now silted up. All that remained of the port was a marshy depression reeking with malaria.

Tarsus, with its university where Athenodorus had taught the whole Mediterranean world from his lecture-room, that city in which East and West, Assyrian, Roman and Greek had met, the

[1] "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám," xvi.

seat of Cicero's civil service, the home of St. Paul, had now become a decrepit town. Along its neglected streets bullock wagons reeled. It was a city torn with feuds between Turk and Armenian. In the streets, as I passed through them, broken safes were still lying where they had been smashed in the looting that had accompanied the massacre of the Armenians five years earlier. St. Paul's claim to be "a citizen of no mean city" would not be valid to-day.

Wherever I saw these lands of the Eastern Mediterranean the story was the same. The tale of degeneration ran from the ruined wine-presses and deserted vineyards of Judæa and Philistia to the sparsely cultivated plain of Jericho, where the jackals howled on the ruins of her walls and the half-starved goats nibbled a precarious livelihood. From the deserted shores of Galilee to the desolate magnificence of Heliopolis, the ruin of empires came sweeping upon one, and it continued all across the Taurus range to that plateau where the carved Greek marbles of Derbe and Lystra are smashed to make shepherds' huts, and the noble aqueduct that carried water to Antioch-in-Pisidia in Paul's day is being pulled down to build the mean houses of Yalovatch.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The courts where Jamskyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahram, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.[1]

The glory has departed. And as I brooded over that world of decadence, on that mound at Tarsus, the impression of the Near and Middle East as a land sunk in unchanging and hopeless apathy grew on my mind.

The cisterns of civilisation were broken. The water had leaked away into the desert.

Was the glory gone for ever? Had the powers of life burned so low that the flame could never quicken again to light the world? Were the very roots of civilisation so poisoned that the tree could never grow again? These were the questions that baffled one.

Then a strange thing happened. Across the snow-ridge of the Taurus mountains ten leagues away, there came a black spot in the sky. It looked like some monstrous and menacing bee. The resemblance was strengthened by the buzzing that gradually became audible. All Tarsus ran out—just as it had run two thousand years before to greet Cleopatra—and the people gazed into

[1] "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám," xvii.

the sky as their forefathers had then gazed on the Queen of Egypt and her glittering *entourage.*

There circled round Tarsus the first aeroplane that was ever seen in that city.

It was a symbol. Under my feet lay the glory of the past; around on the surface lay the degeneracy of the present; from the west in the air came the herald of the new forces that will break up the apathetic inanition of the present and, for better or worse, mould the destinies of the future. It was a military aeroplane. It symbolised that scientific command of material resources, that adventurous aggression of human endeavour, that daring of land and sea and sky for the power to command, which within a few months of that day was to break up the old world and fling it into the melting-pot of universal war. What new world will come out of that crucible? And especially, what will happen to the immemorial East whose life has been shaken to the foundations by war?

The destiny of the Near and Middle East will go far to determine the trend of the new world's life. The future of Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor are of vital moment to London and Washington; to Rome, Paris, Berlin and

Petrograd; to Delhi, Peking and Tokio. For those lands between the Ægean and the Nile on the one hand, and the Caucasus and mountain buttresses of Persia on the other, are strategically a pivot on which world-issues swing, while immeasurable possibilities lie undeveloped in their human and material resources, and, above all, in their spiritual capacities.

With such a past and such a present, what lies hidden in the future? Rival spiritual forces are in combat for control:

> Principalities and powers
> Mustering their unseen array.

It is to the measuring of those forces and the practical consideration of how the powers that will revive life and leadership in Nearer Asia may be reinforced, that we address ourselves in this study of the lands and peoples of the Near and Middle East.

BASIL MATHEWS.

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THE RIDDLE OF NEARER ASIA

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Chapter I

THE CLASH OF EMPIRES

I

ON the horizon of history, silhouetted against the dawn in the East, are two men —the wandering pastoral man with his flocks and herds, and the peasant with his wooden plough. These two—the nomad and the tiller—are there when history begins; they persist to-day; and they will endure.

On those steppe-uplands that we now call Syria and Palestine that fringe the Eastern Mediterranean, and on the high country behind them, the dews of the Great Sea, and some rains, fall. There was more rain there two thousand years ago than falls to-day. But the moisture,

through all historic time, has nourished just so much herbage as will support wandering flocks led from place to place by their owner. The food has, on these highlands, never been sufficient for penned flocks remaining in one place.[1] The owner must therefore follow the food of his sheep or goats or oxen over the hills and along the valleys. He must be as he always has been, a nomad.

To follow his animals he was obliged to discard all unnecessary *impedimenta,* and to diminish to vanishing point his dependence upon other people. His tent was woven from the wool of his own flock, or sewn from their hides with needles of bone and leather thongs; his buckets and bottles for milk and his sling were also made from the hides; his crook and goad and staff were taken from the tough thorns by the brook; from the thickets the simple spindles and distaffs for his womenfolk were cut. He and his clan fed on the milk and flesh of the beasts that he followed; his wife and elder children carried the baby and

[1] A slight variation in rain makes a great difference to sheep-feeding. With a rainfall of twenty inches a year it is possible to keep 600 sheep on a square mile of land; with thirteen inches about 100; and with ten inches only ten sheep.

the bottles and the buckets; and the asses were laden with the tent.

Life for him was—and is—simple. It was not industrial, nor even agricultural: it was purely pastoral. On those wide lands, as we see him against the daybreak of history, he needed and knew no external government; he—the father of his clan and master of his flock—was lord of the group. He was supreme. His authority was father-rule, or "patriarchy." The most living record of the life of these people is in the Old Testament.

On the lowlands like the Philistian plain, or in the broad flat valley of Jordan as it nears the Dead Sea, man could rely more fully on the supply of water from springs, and could create some simple irrigation from the river. He, therefore, settled in one spot, turned up the earth with a simple plough drawn by the oxen that gave him milk and flesh, and threw in his seed. His wife, unlike her nomad sister, was able to put down the baby and the bottles and buckets. When she did that, the whole civilisation changed. She had a settled home. She now ceased to carry all her kitchen and dairy. She, therefore, made or encouraged the making of more serviceable things

—the jar of baked earth for water and milk, the mill-stones to grind the corn that her husband had tilled. She tamed wild fowl which laid eggs for her. She twisted the reed fibre from the stream-side into a bag. She began to ask for a more permanent and roomy home. Other homes gathered round for common defence and mutual service. One man with clever fingers made the pots for all the families in the embryo village. He exchanged the pots for wheat and oil and flesh and cheese.

In a word, agriculture, pottery, weaving and architecture—the village, a system of exchange, and specialised training (which is the beginning of art)—all came into being.

These peoples on the Eastern hills lived in an isolation that was not lonely. It was not lonely for the same reason that the people in a farm on a moor—though isolated—are not lonely; their life was almost cosily domestic and self-contained.

Their isolation was created by great natural frontiers and wastes. To the west was the Great Sea, which to a pastoral and agricultural people was an impassable waste. To the south and east was desert, capable of sustaining but a few people wandering from oasis to oasis.

II

To that people following their flocks on that high saddle of isolated land there came some three to four thousand years before Christ the rumour of strange peoples living across the deserts by great rivers, the peoples of the Nile and of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Between the people of the flock and herd on steppe and hill between Jordan and the sea, and the peoples of the Nile and Tigris there were threads of communication across the deserts. Strings of oases made it possible for the Semite and his camel to hurry eastward from the waters of Abana at Damascus or the waters of Jordan across the sands to great ports of the desert like Kerbela, which stands to the Bagdad of to-day as it did thousands of years ago to Ur or Babylon. Similarly he could run south-westward from east of Jordan to Akaba on the Red Sea and thence by the track across the base of the Sinai peninsula to Memphis; or he could reach the same goal of the Nile through Gaza or Beersheba, and, skirting the sea by what came to be called "the way

of the Philistines," strike across by Ismailia to the Delta.[1]

Across the wilderness to the south-west in Egypt were the people of the Nile, who lived by the great river that was fed mysteriously without rains and flowed along a broad valley between two ranges of hills flanked by desert. These men of the Nile, some four thousand years before Christ, lived in settled separate towns strung like beads on the thread of their river. Each town under its own chief worshipped its separate deity and cultivated its own plantations of canalised irrigated land that would apart from the river have been complete desert.

At last an aggressive leader of a vigorous Nilot town gained power over his less active neighbours and became the king of all that section of the river, taking toll from the dependent towns in produce and man-power. Then one king ruled the whole of the Upper Nile from the first

[1] Here as everywhere throughout any study of the Near and Middle East, a good atlas, with a single map in it that covers the ground from Persia and the Caspian Sea to the Nile and Rome and from Aden to the Balkans, is valuable. A habit of brooding over maps both of the sections of country and the whole area as one arena, gives a fascinating clearness and simplicity to a study that without maps becomes vague and dull.

Cataract to Memphis, and another king ruled the Delta. When the next struggle for power took place and the one supreme king, Menes (about 3300 B.C.), ruled all the towns both on the Upper and Lower Nile, he held in his hand more men—whether for building a mighty pyramid of stone for his tomb or for aggressive war beyond his borders—than any single person had ever commanded in all the life of man. The record of the doings of that day was cut in letters shaped like animals on tablets of clay baked in the brazen furnace of the sun, and was scratched with reed pens on sheets of fibre of the papyrus reed that were rolled up and stored. The towns still kept their separate chiefs and their civic gods; but the new political unity made the need for an Egyptian god to represent it and defend it. The Sun-worship that probably had drifted in from the East began to dominate the Nile.

That Nilot king and his successors had conquered all the land within the natural frontiers of the Nile; he ruled Egypt. On the day when, feeling his power, he looked beyond his own borders for new worlds to conquer, imperialism came to birth in the world.

Imperial Egypt looking around in 2500 B.C.

saw savages to the south in the hills of Abyssinia, shepherds and ploughmen to the north-east in Syria and Palestine. But still farther east beyond the Sinai desert, across the Jordan rift and beyond the Arabian desert, Egypt caught a glimpse of other river men already growing into a civilisation similar to its own.

These Eastern men lived by the two rivers that ran down from the snow-covered mountain lands between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea into the Persian Gulf. They were the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. The life on these rivers was curiously like that of the Nile, yet vitally different.

In many features the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates were like each other and like nothing else in the world. In both cases the river-water came from the melted snow and rains of far-distant mountains, and ran through lands naturally desert that could only be cultivated by canalising the waters of the rivers into a system of irrigation. In both cases the rivers flooded at special seasons of the year. In both cases the silt of the river-floods deposited vast areas of rich and productive soil under a sun of prodigious power.

This strange similarity of environment pro-

duced a similar kind of civilisation in each place. On the Euphrates and the Tigris as on the Nile, towns dotted the river banks and formed a very narrow and long territory. On all three rivers these towns lived a separate life, each under its chief and its petty god. The townsman, when he walked beyond the streets of mud-built reed-thatched little houses, came among plantations that fed on the waters of the river, waters that came into the fields through artificial canals and ditches. In both cases there was an upper and lower river life; and in both cases the towns of each river-section were gradually brought under one king, and the upper and lower kingdoms were then welded into an empire which, when it once felt its power, began to stretch out its hands to grasp its neighbour's territory.

The differences between the two systems were, however, as vital as the similarities. The Nile flowed from south to north, issuing from tropical mountain-land inhabited by "black" savages of little aggressive power and flowing into a temperate sea. The Tigris and Euphrates, on the other hand, flowing from north to south took their origin in mountains and plateaux with a brilliant and bracing atmosphere and flowed into a

tropical gulf. These mountains were inhabited by hardy, vigorous and pugnacious peoples. They were close indeed to the very cradle of the Indo-European race that now dominates the civilisation of the world. Those Asiatic rivers, after flowing for hundreds of miles through this highland territory, passed through undulating lands into vast level plains stretching on either side far beyond the horizon; whereas the Egyptian Nile flowed through a comparatively narrow valley contained by ridges of hills flanked by desert. The people of the Nile valley were and are a people of mixed origin, darker as they go south into Africa, lighter as they near the sea; but essentially one race. The people of the Tigris and Euphrates were of two entirely distinct races, Semitic and Sumerian.

The outstanding effect of the presence of the highland peoples in a vast horse-shoe round the west, north-west, north, north-east and east of the two rivers of the East was two-fold. First, from the beginning and all through history, the civilisation of the plains of the Tigris and the Euphrates had to fight for its life against incessant raids and invasions which welded the jealous river-towns together against a common

foe. Secondly, from these highlanders came fresh stocks of pure and abounding blood to revivify the flaccid arteries of the smitten and enervated peoples of the plain.

Within five hundred years of the consolidation of Egypt under one king, the cities of the lower Tigris and Euphrates had also come under one monarchy, though the rule shifted uneasily from one city to another. The more important towns were those in the lower reaches between the two rivers, in what became later Babylonia.[1] These towns developed a law; they had their privileged nobles, their poor, and their slave class. They were both astronomers and astrologers; they built up both a science and a superstition of the skies.

When the great Sargon, King of Akkad on the Tigris, was monarch over the cities of the Two Rivers (either in defence against the highlanders or from imperialistic desire for glory, or from both) he smote the people of Elam, in

[1] For the sake of clearness we shall in this book retain the word Mesopotamia for the land between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates between the Armenian Uplands and Bagdad. From Bagdad southward between the rivers and to the Delta it will be convenient to use the ancient name Babylonia. The modern Arabic name is Irak.

the uplands of what is now South-West Persia; he sent his ships down the Persian Gulf to control the Bahrein Islands; he conquered the Semites of South Armenia; he reduced the Amorites whose rule over Northern Syria stretched from the Euphrates to the Great Sea, and he laid his sceptre over Cyprus.

About twenty-five centuries before Christ, the Egyptian kings pressed across Sinai and the desert, broke through Gaza and Beersheba (which have been all through history the doorway into Palestine and the gates of Egypt), and held both Phœnicia and Palestine.

In that first picture of the kings of the rivers of the East and of Egypt building up the riches of their Empires by conquest in Asia Minor, Persia, the Islands, and Syria and Palestine, and finding on the hills of Syria and Palestine a place where their purposes clashed, is gathered up as in a single parable the central meaning of the next three thousand years of history. It is a ceaseless record of hammer and anvil. Empire fought against Empire. Egypt and Babylon (or later Babylon and Nineveh), Babylon and Greece, Rome and Persia, were alternately and successively hammer and anvil. But always between

"THE PEASANT WITH HIS WOODEN PLOUGH"
Tilling in the Plain of Esdraelon, Northern Palestine,
with primitive plough similar to those in use four thousand years ago

the hammer and the anvil were the Semite people of the hills between Jordan and the sea, heated in the fires of war, smitten in the clash of Empire upon Empire, and tempered in the bitter waters of exile in Egypt and in Babylon.

These hill-peoples, when taken as captives by the captains of the armies of King Sargon to his capital of Akkad, saw such a river as they had never dreamed of and plains that stretched away, interminable as the sea. In the city, which was vaster than they could grasp, they saw long streets lined with little cave-like shops, open squares thronged by jostling merchants, caravans of laden camels bringing in goods from other cities, cloths and leather trappings, knives and daggers, enamelled jars and embroidered robes. These Semites, as worshippers of a holy unseen God, were startled to see the sensual worship of Astarte, the voluptuous goddess of Babylon, and the gorgeous rites of Baal.

Trading grew up between the Semitic hillmen and the river-city men; sheepskins and wools and leathers coming across the desert from the patriarchal clans; and knives, pans and new fashions in clothes being carried back. There was a still busier traffic between Babylonia and Mesopotamia

on the one hand and on the other the vigorous Amorite peoples up by Damascus and on the Upper Euphrates. When the successors of King Sargon had suffered his empire to decay, an Amorite Napoleon, a highland chieftain named Sumuabu, swept down the Euphrates and grasped a great area of land between the Rivers. Something over two thousand years before Christ he made a city called the Gate of the Gods (or Babilu) [1] his capital. A hundred years later Sumuabu's successor, Hammurabi (about 2280 B.C.), that mighty Babylonian king of Amorite ancestry, the systematiser of law, struck southward toward the Persian Gulf and conquered "Ur of the Chaldees," smote eastward and reduced the troublesome Elamites on the Persian border, flung his forces northward and brought under his rule the Assyrian hinterland on the higher grass-steppes, with its new head-city of Nineveh on the Upper Tigris. Here, in Nineveh, as in Babylon the supreme goddess was Astarte. But whereas the Astarte of Babylon was the goddess of lust, the Astarte of Nineveh was the goddess of war.

The power of Babylon, however, was crumpled up by the double buffeting from the Hittites from

[1] Hebrew—Babel; Greek—Babylon.

the north-west, who carried the great god Baal away to their own city in triumph, and from the Vossæans of the north-east.

In the darkness that followed, the more fierce and virile Semites of Assyria, with their civilisation centred in Asshur and in Nineveh, grasped the reins of empire. Assyria having borrowed its arts and its faith from Babylonia braced them with its harsh tonic of "blood and iron." The Assyrian was a man of war, ruthless and remorseless. The religion of Asshur, the war-god, was a Gospel of "frightfulness." The Assyrian soldier proclaimed that Gospel with sword and spear, and for a thousand years, from 1600 to 600 B.C. wrote it across the ancient world in blood and fire from the plateau of Persia to the gates of Egypt. In the name of Asshur they covered the walls of captured cities with the flayed skins of their enemies, "strawed the earth with their bodies, as they had been beasts of the field," crucified them, "gathered together the heads in the form of crowns, and their pierced bodies in the form of garlands."

The dominance of Assyria was again and again challenged during those thousand years, and more than once her empire was suddenly disrupted

and again almost as rapidly restored. Indeed, the period from 1600 to 600 B.C. was, in one respect, a thousand years of war between Assyria and Babylon for the coveted riches of the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia which lay between them.

The kaleidoscope of change in all this period of history baffles the grasp of the imagination. The brain reels in attempting to follow the bewildering and swift succession of the rising and falling fortunes of Babylonian, Egyptian, Assyrian, Amorite and Mede. The cause of the rapid and complex changes was due to the fact that imperial rule, through all history before Rome rose to power, meant simply military dominance with the sole objects of tribute (or loot) and glory. The conquering monarch never thoroughly administered, developed and protected the general life of the people under his rule. To be conquered, therefore, meant the payment of tribute with no return in real protection and government, combined with oppression under the heel of the victor. Such conditions combined the maximum of temptation for the conquered and taxed subjects to rebel with the minimum of capacity for the ruling power to resist. The system—or lack of system—erected the pyramid

of empire upon the apex of domination instead of upon the broad base of general consent and content. The Assyrian imperial idea, like that of Babylonia and Egypt, reposed on the desire for material splendour and wealth and the satisfaction of the glory of a purely national god whose ethic was brutal and gross.

Following for simplicity's sake only the great conquests and movements, this principle of empire for domination and loot, and of rebellion to escape those two evils, will make clear the trend of the imperial fortunes of the nations.

III

Centuries after the Assyrian empire had entered on its full course, King Tiglath-pileser I. of Nineveh (about 1120 B.C.), like a whirling flail, struck east against the highlanders of Kurdestan, north into Ararat,[1] west against the hill-men between the Upper Euphrates and Asia Minor, while south-west he strode across Syria and Lebanon to the Phœnician coast-land, and south he hurled his forces against Babylonia. Tiglath-

[1] Ararat is not a mountain but a mountainous country.

pileser was triumphant everywhere save against Babylon which smote him a reeling blow.

Within a century or so of his death, however, the Assyrian wave temporarily ebbed. During that time the Semitic tribes, whom we know as the Hebrew people, who had earlier been driven by drought from Palestine across the Sinaitic desert to seek corn in Egypt, poured back again over the desert and across the hills of Moab, made the passage of the Jordan, and through three centuries of contest drove from the hill country the Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites and other tribes.

The method of Hebrew rule was still largely patriarchal among the different clans. But the perils of the desert and the necessities of battle had unified them under a leadership (like that of Joshua) which was partly religious and partly military. A God-given Law made this leadership under more settled conditions increasingly judicial and priestly. The Hebrew people found their first unity in a common faith in a God who gave sanction to law. Authority, therefore, centred in a judge and prophet, a rule of which the ideal type is Samuel.

The Hebrew people were surrounded, however, by little aggressive kingdoms, like the Syrians of

Damascus on the north, the people of the Moabite hills on the east, the Philistines of the plain on the south. They, therefore, demanded a military leader. The judicial and priestly rule gave way to the kingly command. Saul followed Samuel (about 1020 B.C.). Under his successor, David, they made Jerusalem their capital. Jerusalem, the centre of the holy worship of the invisible Almighty God, whom their fathers had learned to worship on the hills among their flocks under the star-strewn night sky, became the kingly capital, the centre of law, the home of worship and the shrine of all national ideals.

At last this people—and this people alone in all that world—came to the full consciousness that God was One and Almighty. They gave witness to the most tremendous truth revealed to the mind of man: "In the beginning God." God was not, as with the peoples of the Tigris and the Nile, a god of War or of the Sun, who shared worship with a goddess of lust and with a hundred local civic godlets of crocodile or cat. He was not a god governing the flood and drought of a great river. He was God, One and Almighty and Infinite; God whose image could not be shaped by human hands for worship in

visible form; God who "created the heaven and the earth," and said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Sheltered by a tent of skins and continuously and strictly rationed (as to himself, his family, and flocks) by the unseen powers behind nature, the shepherd—like David upon the hills about Jerusalem—became quick to know this dependence on the Hand that dropped the dew and sent the fierce heat of the sirocco. God was the source of new life—"He cometh down as rain upon the mown grass." The forces of nature—rain, dew, living water, sunshine, the power to bear children—were His good gifts; the forces of nature also—locusts, the wind from the desert, childlessness, even the fierce power of the Philistines—were the instruments of His displeasure.

His anger was to be feared, not in uncertainty and terror as the capricious wrath of a tyrant, but because His wrath was caused by the breach of a right and just rule which God Himself lives by—*i.e.* God was not only Almighty, but was Just (or Righteous) and Holy. You knew what His will was, and so knew what your conduct should be.

It was natural to a pastoral people to think of

God in pictures from their own life with their flocks and herds. These herds were His.

> For every beast of the forest is mine,
> And the cattle upon a thousand hills.

The perfection of His care was that of the ideal shepherd.

> For He is our God:
> And we are the people of His pasture
> And the sheep of His hand.

The isolation of the people naturally made them think not only of Him as specially theirs, but of themselves as specially His. From our modern view we weigh up this thought as erring by its exclusiveness. But we fall into a profound blunder if that criticism blinds us to the gift of this new vision of a God, the almighty Creator of the universe, who yet had the shepherd's zeal for a little flock. That thought sings its way through their loveliest song in His praise, the song that carries the shepherd thought to its perfection of care and guidance and protection:

> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
> He leadeth me beside the still waters,

and then rises on unflagging pinions to a limitless trust:

> I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me.

This thought of God as a God specially protecting and leading one nation was the root out of which sprang an idea which may be soberly described—when all its implications are kept in view—as the greatest and the mightiest conception that has ever entered the thought of man—the idea of the Kingdom of God.

For the hill-country shepherd, like David, seated at night on a boulder looking out over the waste, listening to the wild cry of the jackal, and watching the stars in "the bowl of night," had immensity about him and over him. He knew that that immensity was made by creative hands. Awe came upon him; he felt himself to be in the presence of a Power greater than himself. He began to know the fear of a holy God. That fear was only the beginning of his wisdom. But it was the beginning of all his wisdom. With the awe came humility. As he sat at night guarding his flocks and gazing into the skies, he put his thoughts into a song of awe to the Power that had made himself and them:

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and stars, which Thou hast ordained;
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

That revelation of a holy, almighty, creative God and of His right to rule over all His creation, that ideal of a theocracy omnipotent over all human rule, was developed by God through prophets, priests and kings in the Hebrew people as they endured the long agonies of invasion and exile. The horror of the Assyrian who ". . . came down like a wolf on the fold" and the cruel might of Egypt, brought to birth and at once quickened, tested and strengthened the thought of the omnipotent power of a protecting Shepherd-God over this tiny principality. Against the armies of Assyria like the sands for number and against the chariots and horsemen of Egypt, this puny people in their hill-fastnesses of Judæa pitted God, the invisible King.

The two mightiest empires that the world had ever seen, mobilising between them the armed forces of the known world, wealthy beyond imagination, stood like enormous giants towering threateningly above a cradle child. Words cannot exaggerate the imminence of the terror that

threatened to take up Israel and Judah like children and dash their brains out against the wall of armed might, when Sennacherib of Nineveh (705-681 B.C.) filled the world with the cry "Babylon is fallen—is fallen," and striding past Palestine met and conquered the armies of Egypt on the Philistine plain.

On the small ridge of Palestinian hills between Assyria and Egypt in that day the drama of history came to a supreme crisis in a scene of heroic simplicity and epic grandeur. To grasp the central significance of that hour is to hold the key to the meaning of history; for there came into stark conflict the forces that fight on the earth through all time for the control of the destinies of men. Those forces were incarnate in two personalities that dominated that narrow stage—Sennacherib and Isaiah, the son of Amoz.

Myriads of soldiers of all nationalities from the borders of Persia to the hills of Syria and from the delta below Babylon to the mountains of Ararat fought at Sennacherib's nod. He was the All-highest of world-dominion. On a stony hill in a land about the size of a small English county like Sussex, among a little people of no military power stood Jerusalem, capital of Judæa.

And Jerusalem stood in the path of Sennacherib —a little thing to be brushed aside by the lord of the world as he marched.

In that hour, Isaiah, the subject of Ahaz the petty king of this infinitesimal land, faced by Sennacherib's might and majesty of power, declared in burning and immortal words the essential futility of might and the powerlessness of "Power." He described, by a perfect simile, the arrogant standpoint of the imperialism of Sennacherib, who says:

> My hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth: and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.[1]

Then in a series of ironic questions Isaiah declared that all that power was only the axe boasting itself against the hand that hews with it or the staff talking as though it could lift itself, "as if it were no wood."

Indeed Assyria the mighty was to the fearless vision of Isaiah the merest tool of God, to be used when He will as a rod and then put aside. Men should ask of such a king as Sennacherib, "Is *this* the man that made the earth to tremble, that

[1] Isaiah x. 14.

did shake kingdoms?" And as for Babylon, towering in its four-square pride and awing the people by its indestructible walls and its power:

> I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

On all this sombre and threatening thunder-cloud of imperial menace, Isaiah threw the immortal and prophetic picture of the *Power* against which all such material force and towering imperial ambition will fight but will break to pieces. This divine power was to be incarnate in One upon whom "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." The bases of the new world-order which Isaiah arrayed against the existing material order were righteousness and equity. Isaiah gave the glorious prophetic picture of the new rule in images of beauty that the world cannot forget:

> Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
> And the government shall be upon his shoulder:
> And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
> The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace
There shall be no end.

. . . . . .

To order it and to establish it
With judgment and with justice
From henceforth even for ever.[1]

In that moment of history, Isaiah with his piercing vision and his lips aglow with the coal from the divine fire, challenged all selfish aggrandisement, all tyranny and all aggression in human government. And Isaiah challenged these things by presenting the positive programme of a rule of God, resting on justice and mercy and the use of strength to protect the weak; a rule ultimately to be universal in extent—for it was to increase till "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

BOOKS, ETC., FOR FURTHER READING

G. A. Smith, *Atlas to the Historical Geography of the Holy Land.* (Hodder & Stoughton.)
Edwyn Bevan, *The Land of the Two Rivers.* (Edward Arnold.)
J. L. Myres, *The Dawn of History.* (Williams & Norgate.)
D. G. Hogarth, *The Ancient East.* (Williams & Norgate.)

[1] Isaiah ix. 6-7.

The Old Testament, and especially Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah i.-xxxix.

G. A. Smith, "Trade and Commerce." (*Encyclopædia Biblica.*)

Franz Buhl, "Roads and Travel in the Old Testament." (Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* Extra Volume.)

G. A. Smith, *Syria and the Holy Land.* [Price 1s. net. Contains two excellent maps.] (Hodder & Stoughton.)

Chapter II

THE NEW KINGDOM

I

ASSYRIA, to use Isaiah's simile, continued to gather eggs from the nest of the East and the West.

The son of Sennacherib strode across to the Nile and conquered Memphis, the capital of Lower Egypt. His successor sacked Thebes, the immense and powerful capital of Upper Egypt, and in the east conquered Elam. A dominion stretching from the plateau of Persia to the deserts beyond the Nile, and from the Persian Gulf to the borders of the Black Sea could surely laugh at the idealistic theocracies of Isaiah.

Two thrusts came, however, simultaneously against the Assyrian power, one from a people in the East, the other from new soldiers of the West. One common factor in the two attacks makes this the porch of a new era. The attack from the West was made from Egypt by mercen-

aries from the Islands of the Ægean—Hellenes, or, as we say, Greeks: that from the East came from the Medes who, like the Hellenes, belonged to the Aryan or Indo-European race. Those Hellenes and Medes were early representatives on the stage of history of the Aryan race, whose culture and civilisation were to become the dominating influence in the world.

Scythian hordes swept down from north of the Caucasus and like a barbarous tidal wave washed over Media, Assyria, and even to the shores of the Mediterranean and the gates of Egypt. But that wave ebbed. The Medes rose stronger than ever, caught the weakened Assyrian Empire in flank, and, with the co-operation of Babylon, brought Assyria crashing to the earth, never to rise again. Men survived the final fall of Nineveh who as boys had seen Assyria exercising the greatest sway ever wielded by one monarch.

The old Assyrian Empire was carved up, the Medes coming from beyond Ararat took the northern part with its capital Nineveh, while Babylon revived a more than imperial splendour under Nebuchadnezzar (604 to 562 B.C.), who built its towers to the sky surrounded by walls of unheard of breadth and strength.

Nebuchadnezzar strove toward Egypt, failed of his final objective, but held the ridge of Palestine, shattered Jerusalem, brought the temple of Solomon crashing to the ground, and carried away both king and people of Judæa from the loved familiar hills to the weary plains of the Euphrates.

II

The little city of Jerusalem, from which the Jews had been swept, could have sheltered within the walls of one of Nebuchadnezzar's palaces. In size, in material wealth, in power, Judæa was infinitesimal when compared with the Babylonian Empire. But the loyalty of the Jewish people to their city upon the hills was the most passionate and enduring patriotism that the world has seen. The city and its shrine of the Most High God were a rubble-heap; the people were exile-slaves divided from their desolate limestone hill by three hundred leagues of desert; but from the shade of the willows of the Euphrates their poignant cry went up:

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Through these years of Jewish exile in Babylon, while many fell from their allegiance, the Faithful held that high loyalty unsullied amid all detraction and derision. They nursed the unconquerable hope of return—

Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

With the loyalty and the hope of return to the city stood their fidelity to the worship of the unseen and holy God. In Babylon the vast and opulent temples and the myriad votaries of the gross deities of the land challenged the austere Hebrew worship of the one Lord. Some of the exiles fell victims to the remorseless pressure of the temptations to conformity on the one hand and the threat of the den of lions and the fiery furnace on the other. The destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people were declared by Ezekiel, the prophet of the exile, to be the scourge of God for the infidelity of Hebrew people to Him and for their fall into the worship of the foreign and false gods of Babylonia and Egypt. But those who stood fast held the faith by a purer

and a more lofty and determined loyalty than ever. They were the men purified as by fire—of whom Daniel is the type. If the Assyrian in the days of Sennacherib and Isaiah was the spur of Hebrew religion, Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Ezekiel was its purge.

The gauntlet of challenge between the opposed ideals that are always fighting for the rule over man has never been flung down on the pavement of history with more ringing and uncompromising emphasis than in the hour when the exiled Jews walked in Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar and his Empire stood for imperial domination without service, for the glory of material wealth, for the splendour of cities and palaces and the opulent ceremonial of the gods of war and lust, for the "will-to-power," for the pride of life and the satisfaction of the flesh, for the legitimacy of loot and the divine right of might.

But in the Hebrew people in exile, who knew that Jehovah's city was wrecked, His temple a heap, His sacred vessels defiled with the wines offered to the bestial gods of Babylon, the ancient patriotism, which had previously centred round the glories of the visible city of Jehovah, now

burned with devotion to God. His spiritual lordship and holy wisdom became the more intensely real as the national and visible properties of His reign—the city and the temple—disappeared. In spite of exile and the ruin of their land, the Faithful People would return (the prophet told them) by and through the power of the Lord their God, to live under His rule. The outlines of the eternal city of God and the world-temple of His presence became dimly visible within the promise of the restored Kingdom.

The discipline of those centuries of storm and exile gradually revealed to the Hebrew people the thought of a nation whose rôle in history might be that of "the suffering servant," whose greatness should lie not in gain but in gift, not in domination over others but in service of God's holy will, not in imposing law upon others but in such an obedience to His law that their state should become the miniature and pattern of His Kingdom.

The Jews and Babylon in that hour presented in violent contrast the forces that are in all history fighting for the control of the world.

Babylonia, on the one side, was in the saddle and could ride mankind. She held in her hand

"the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." On the other hand, the devotees of the unseen God lay prostrate and naked amid the wreckage of their own aspirations. They could point to no sign either of the being or the power of the Lord God whom they declared to be the maker of the heavens and the earth.

If God were not, then Babylon was right; for Babylon had achieved to the full the pomp and circumstance that were her aim. The exiles on the banks of her river were men travailing for perfection and only bringing to birth good mingled with evil. But if God was, and if the establishment of His Kingdom was the sole aim of the true spirit of man, then those baffled but undaunted spirits who still agonised for good were more triumphant in the battles that they lost than was Babylon in the victories that she won.

III

Vengeance, however, loomed like thunder on the horizon. Out of the Eastern Highlands a new power came. The Persians, another branch of the Indo-European race, found a superb leader in Cyrus, who in 550 B.C. became king both of the

Medes and Persians at Ecbatana. Within four years he had run westward to the Ægean Sea and absorbed the kingdom of Lydia. He then swung on his tracks eastward and harried the threatening hordes that hung on his flank from Baluchistan and the Khyber Pass to Bokhara and the Caspian Sea.

Cyrus turned and crushed Babylon herself under his heel. The Empire of Babylon perished for ever from the earth. The exiled Hebrew people were freed by Cyrus to go back from the Euphrates to rebuild the city of their dreams.

When Cyrus's son, Cambyses, had conquered Egypt an empire was handed on to his successor Darius that was unparalleled in history for continuous extent. With its head resting on the mountains that buttress India and on the plateau of Central Asia, its mighty limbs stretched to the Ægean, the Nile, and the Persian Gulf.

Darius then took a great new step. He strode across the Ægean Sea to Macedonia and laid his rod over the Danube. He was always having trouble with the irrepressibly rebellious Hellenic cities on the Ægean coast of Asia Minor. He found that they were stimulated and helped by their sister cities in the Hellenic motherland that

we call Greece. Darius, therefore, sent his fleets across the Ægean and landed troops to crush the nuisance at its source. But in 490 B.C. the might of Persia ran back and fled in its ships from the ferocity of the soldiers of a free Hellenic city called Athens. Darius's son Xerxes, in 479, massed together mighty armies with soldiers from all his provinces—Indian, Persian, Median, Babylonian—and marched on Greece from Macedonia, only to suffer irretrievable and final defeat at Platæa.

The separate Hellenic city-states, both in Greece and on the Asiatic shores of the Ægean, led by Athens now formed a league of defence and defiance against Persia. In those little Greek city-states the foundation stones of the world that we know were being laid. We owe to Greece the ideas that lie at the root of our thought, the ways of reasoning, the perception of beauty and the power to interpret beauty in marble and in literature. In Athens and her sister cities the Greeks especially developed a feeling for the dignity of the individual man and a passion for freedom and a practice of liberty in government, that were then new in the world.

This Greek way of looking at things, called

Hellenism, was in striking contrast with Asiatic ideas. Asia stood for the profound wisdom of experience; Greece was always seeking some new thought or aspiration. The Greek examined things with fresh eyes and asked for their real causes; the Asiatic quoted the tradition of the fathers. Asia stood for despotism based on passive obedience; Greece for liberty based on active and free consent. Greece made new laws to fit new conditions; Asia quoted and interpreted Hammurabi or Moses. Asiatic art was conventional and traditional; Greece rendered beauty as she saw it with her own eyes. Asia based its morals on custom or inspiration; Greece tried to root hers in the laws of nature. Greece stood for the free adventure of the mind, the development of the body, for athletic poise and balanced growth to complete manhood. Greece had the clearest eyes in the world for the seen; Asia's piercing insight penetrated the unseen. Greece was the calm scientist and intense artist; Asia was the passionate visionary. Greece proceeded from the known to the unknown by thorough logical processes; Asia soared on the wings of wonder. Each had a noble contribution to make to the world. Aristotle the Greek and

Isaiah the Asiatic have as little in common with one another as had Pheidias the sculptor with Nehemiah the lawgiver and architect of Jerusalem; but the world would be immeasurably poorer for the loss of either.

This revolutionary Hellenic culture, this new Greek standard of living and way of looking at life, developed swiftly to an amazing perfection. Then almost suddenly it stopped developing in its home around the Ægean Sea and spread over the world even more swiftly than it had grown.

There is nothing on the large scale more dramatic or more momentous in the record of man than the story of that tremendous decade (333-323 B.C.) in which the young pupil of Aristotle, Alexander of Macedon, at the head of his Macedonian and Greek world shattered and scattered the Persian Empire, and built on the ruins of the widest rule the world had seen a mightier empire still. Alexander's imperial mandate, when he died in Nebuchadnezzar's palace in Babylon, ran from the Balkans to the Punjab, and from the Nile and the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea and the Caspian.

And wherever Alexander's officers went, Hellenism penetrated . The Asiatic way of looking at

life remained; but it was now, in the great cities of Asia, being saturated with Greek thought and art.

Alexander's early death left his Empire vast and unconsolidated. It split into three fragments —the European section,[1] all the Asiatic section except Palestine, and Egypt and Palestine. The Asiatic section, stretching from the Ægean Sea to the Persian plateau, was ruled for three centuries by Seleucus and his successors. And the story of their rule is the record of the leaven of Hellenism working in the mass of Asiatic life.

When the Parthian hordes from Central Asia swept down, destroyed the Seleucid Empire, and held semi-barbaric power throughout Nearer Asia for some four centuries, the Greek way of life still persisted as an indestructible element in the cities.

IV

At last a new power that had long been "mewing its mighty youth" in the western Mediterranean, threw its full force into the struggle.

[1] The idea of Europe had not, of course, then begun to exist. This section included Macedonia and Thrace.

Rome, fully armed, leapt determinedly into the arena of Nearer Asia as a combatant for world-empire.

In the first century B.C., when the savages of Britain first saw the standard of Cæsar in the surf off Kent, Rome established herself on the great bridge between West and East, Asia Minor. She soon fought her way across the Taurus Mountains and consolidated her power over Cilicia, Syria and Palestine. Rome in that day set its own rulers directly appointed from the Imperial city over some parts of the territory, and set native princes under Roman suzerainty over other parts. Herod Agrippa was to the Roman Empire what a prince like the Gaekwar of Baroda is to Britain to-day.

Of all the wonderful things about Rome perhaps the most splendid as we look back over the long perspective of the centuries is, that she gave to the world the massive foundations of ordered life that have endured ever since, yet kept alive, on the basis of that order, the priceless treasures of the soul of Asia and of the mind of Greece. Roman law and order were the gold setting to the priceless jewels of Hellenism and the Faith which

was to come to birth in the folds of the hills of Palestine.

Rome, in that language of hers which has woven itself into the very tissue of life, has given us no more characteristic word than *dominium*. But equally characteristic are the words *pax* and *commercium*. Her best will was not, like that of the Assyrian, slaughter and loot and lust, but order and peace and commerce.

Rome not only imposed peace on the myriad feuds of Nearer Asia; she held back the stormy hordes of the Central Asian Uplands from wiping the culture, the arts and the whole civilisation of Greece and Asia from the earth. There had not in all history been any quiet upon the earth to compare with the *Pax Romana*. It was, however, the quiet not of any league of free nations, but of the settled will and iron hand of Rome. It was imposed peace.

Rome's permanent gift to the world was in the realm of character and organisation, not in culture or art or spiritual vision. Empire, for the first time in the human record, was completely systematised and ordered from the centre outwards. Her roads stetched across half a continent as straight as a taut bow-line. All roads

led to Rome and from Rome, and along those paved imperial ways the couriers from the Mistress of the World rode out with her commands. The Empire was, for the most part, ordered on a basis of just law and administered through an official system less corrupt than any that had preceded it. She filled the world also with small fellowships—guilds, associations, societies, clubs—which created the habit of corporate action and made men feel that a group had almost the unity of a person.

In character Rome's greatest gift can almost be summed up in the word *constantia*—steady tenacity of purpose, firm will, the sailing of the well-ballasted ship of life on an even keel with a firm hand on the rudder. She educated the will more than the mind. Authority was her god, discipline her law, duty her moral code. She contributed little to the arts of life. Her great contribution in relation to culture was that her sublimely ordered system, her peace, her lines of communication on the roads and the sea-tracks over the Mediterranean which had become a Roman lake, gave Greek culture a perfect medium in which to spread.

As the years moved on through the first cen-

tury to its close, the order of life in the Roman Empire was gradually changing from the severity and strength of military expansion to the softer and quieter developments of commerce and civil life. Asia Minor—"the province of five hundred towns"—became the wealthy granary of the world. Wealth corroded the old Roman steel-temper; ease corrupted the simple integrity; Asiatic influences developed sensual grossness. Yet letters lifted the mind from the pre-occupations of war, art touched the hard world with beauty of form and colour, commerce brought a higher level of life to the many.

Rome, and that means the world of her day, was at the cross-roads. Her civilisation would move onward either to new triumphs of progress, or to depravity and decadence.

On the eastern frontiers of that empire the subject Jewish people were still—

Nursing the unconquerable hope

of the coming Rule of God. The longer their subjection to alien rule persisted, the deeper and stronger grew the roots of the Messianic Hope. Looking back across the centuries to the days when God made a direct covenant with them

on bringing them from Egypt to Canaan, they counted on Him to be as good as His word. They looked forward to 'the Day,' not the Day of ruthless Domination for themselves, but the "Day of the Lord." A few far-sighted spirits looked for a miraculous breaking-in of the supernatural; the majority expected a political freedom from foreign domination, secured under a Prince of Peace, and broke out into intermittent rebellion against Rome. Both parties looked, however, for a Golden Age to come, when the divine resources would come in to frustrate evil and fulfil good, to take away all root of bitterness. Both wondered with longing why the coming tarried.

V

In that day, when Rome stood at the cross-roads of decision and Judæa on the hill-top of expectancy (literally and historically "in the fulness of time"), a Boy was born in a village in an obscure province of that world-empire,—the Son of a peasant Mother. "His name was called Jesus."

He, when He had shared for some thirty years the common life of His people, declared that the

Rule of God towards which they looked was at hand. He was, in fact, the King already come to build the Kingdom of God "on earth as in heaven."

Jesus, the anointed—the Christ—proclaimed this as Good News,—the Gospel, as we say. The Gospel was news of an event to come, but to come by the power of an already achieved fact. The fact was His own Sonship to God. The event to come was the achieved Kingdom in which the life of man both in his motives and acts would be ruled entirely by the will of God.

The character of God, of course, controlled the character of His Rule. God, revealed by Jesus Christ, is "Holy Father." He is righteous. He is love. His Kingdom, therefore, is based on His Fatherhood and on justice and brotherhood, which are righteousness and love in action. God's rule rests on the definite recognition by the child of his own disobedience and on a repentance that issues in free acceptance of God's will by His child, in contrast with the current imperial rule imposed on an unwilling alien. God's Kingdom, therefore, will tarry till the child accepts the Will of the Father. And directly the child accepts that Will, the Kingdom actually comes in him as an indi-

vidual. And to that extent, it comes in the nation and the race to which the individual belongs.

The law of the Kingdom in a sentence is that "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."

The life of the disciple of this Kingdom is as fully one with Christ in God as the branches are one with the vine. It receives from Him the sap of life, which flowing through the branches bursts into leaf and bloom, and comes to fruit. It grows because it is one with Him.

The Kingdom is thus at once perfectly receptive and vehemently active. It is combatant for the sake of others as the Good Shepherd fights the wolf, laying down His life to fight for the sheep. It is a seed dying to multiply life; leaven lost in revolutionising the nature of the lump. Its growth is based on the active will to grow like the Father; for to enter the Kingdom one must accept the rule of God as a child. It is in essence a conscious fellowship of the child with the Father-God in Christ.

The Christian Kingdom of God is clearly not based on any material opulence or power. At the very outset the imperial idea was definitely placed

before Jesus Christ as a temptation. "All the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" were promised to Him on evil conditions, and He in repudiating that imperial ambition defined the basis of the Kingdom of God—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The Kingdom, then, is to come as a force transforming the inner life of the individual man and, through him, the whole world-order in which he lives. It is the supernatural breaking in upon the natural and revolutionising it. God breaks in both by His own will and grace and by the will of His children who are reconciled to Himself.

The Kingdom does not, however, at this stage break in to smash the natural order, but to fulfil it; to help it to realise the end for which it was made. Christ is God coming as Man to man. He comes not to break man's true nature but to shatter the power of the evil that everlastingly frustrates his growth. Christ exercises power above natural power, but not contrary to natural law. And the method by which the divine power is, so to speak, called in from man's side to change the life of the individual, the nation, the world,

is communion with God. Co-operation of man with God by prayer brings the Kingdom of God on earth. Christ lived to proclaim that Kingdom; His death was the supreme suffering inflicted on Him for His refusal to let sin have its will. The Cross is the scene of the ultimate conflict of holy love against evil. The Cross is the eternal witness to the agony that the sin of His children causes in the heart of God, and to His forgiveness of sin in the repentant son. When Christ rose He broke the empire of sin, the *dominium* of evil.

In a word, Christ revealed for the first time and for all time that the Kingdom could really come perfectly. And He revealed the cost at which it will come—sacrifice, blood, agony, death in war with the powers of evil. He was at once the promise of the Kingdom of a transformed and perfected world, and Power to bring it into being.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING.

Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah xl. to end.
The Gospels.
W. Warde Fowler, *Rome.* (Williams & Norgate.)
T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History.* (Student Movement.)
See also end of Chapter I. for Edwyn Bevan and D. G. Hogarth.

Chapter III

THE DAWN OF A NEW HUMANITY

I

IN that world of the Roman Empire men and women hungering for what they called "salvation" (*soteria*) raked together the straws of magic and the sticks of spiritualism to bake for themselves some meagre bread of religion.

On the roadsides of the Empire were set up uncounted stones bearing inscriptions asking prayer for salvation. To the Roman, salvation might mean power in an endless life; to the Greek, release, expansion and health—athletic fitness of body and mind; to the Jew, a place in the coming Kingdom of the Messiah. But the need for salvation was universal and profound. In a world that had thus lost faith in the ancient gods of paganism, a myriad cults and philosophies and some powerful religions competed for men's

loyalty. Generals conducted campaigns guided by the entrails of beasts and the flight of birds. Sorcerers like Elymas of Paphos were able to hypnotise high Roman officials like Sergius Paulus. Oriental astrologists captivated thousands by mystic signs on parchments such as those of which Paul made a great bonfire in Ephesus.

The worship of Isis the Queen of Heaven, the merciful mother of the god Horus, and Serapis, god of the world of spirits, spread from the banks of the Nile to the cities on the Orontes, the Cayster, and the Tiber. The priests of the great Earth-Mother, Cybele, the source of life, goddess of the powers of rain and sunshine, whose immemorial rites had their home in Asia Minor, bathed her devotees in the bath of sacrificial cleansing blood. From farther east on the plateau of Persia the worship of the sun-god, Mithra—the soldiers' religion—ran westward in a tidal wave that threatened to obliterate all other faiths and to engulf the imperial throne itself. The powerful mystery religions blended eastern ritual and mysticism with western philosophy in a form that attracted the cultivated, and by processes of initiation secured the loyalty of multitudes and the leadership of the elect.

One other cult held sway not by its own living power, but by the will of the State. The worship both of dead and living emperors and the adoration of imperial images were introduced, partly to fill the vacuum formed by the destruction of faith in the pagan gods and partly to give sacred power to the state. It literally made the Empire of Rome, for its subjects, equivalent to a Kingdom of God. To refuse to worship the Emperors was high treason and blasphemy.

The dispersed Jews, who formed a small but highly influential body, carried out a vigorous propaganda of Judaism. The power of a high and pure worship of the one righteous unseen God drew in many thousands of finer spirits—who turned from the unmoral, and often immoral, cults of the discredited pagan idols to the powerful, clear-cut moral standards of Jehovah.

II

This bankruptcy of the old religions and the hunger for "salvation" assured a hearing for a message rooted in reality and satisfying human need. The life of the Roman Empire in other respects also was greatly favourable to a religious

campaign. The universal use of the Greek language in the cities gave an unsurpassed medium for such popular missionary Hellenists as Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy and Titus. The dispersed Jews in their synagogues throughout the whole Roman world provided, in their more liberal elements, the germs of a new movement. The magnificent administration of the Roman Empire meant that for the first time in history splendid and securely guarded roads and sea-routes gave free means of communication throughout the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, with a busy international traffic.

From the point of view of this Roman Empire the comrades who turned back from the hill-top of the Ascension to the fellowship of the upper-room in Jerusalem were an obscure negligible group of provincials. They were simply a religious company of men of Semitic race, speaking a curious local dialect called Aramaic, in an outlying and relatively unimportant outpost of the Empire. To Rome they were as microscopic as a quaint new sect in India would now appear to be from the point of view of Whitehall.

These Nazarenes were certainly exceptional in that they held the incredible blasphemy that this

peasant who had been nailed to the Roman gallows, accursed of God under the Sacred Law, was actually the Son of God—Christos, the Anointed. They said He had been proved to be so by the fact that God with His finger had broken the power of death and had raised Him to life. They even went further and declared that God's Holy Spirit had entered their own lives and had made new men of them.

So Stephen the Martyr and Saul "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" became the contesting figures of a passionate debate followed by a ruthless persecution. The disciples of the Way of Jesus were flung out of the little nest of Jerusalem.

As they travelled out among the villages the gossips asked why they had been persecuted. They in reply told the story of the Lord Jesus and related the good news of the Kingdom of God that they had learned at His lips. In a word they proclaimed the Gospel. Saul, stamping on the fire in Jerusalem, had sent the burning embers aflame through the land.

Saul, however, in order to crush the sect in both the capital cities (trusting it to smoulder out in the country districts) set out towards Da-

mascus on his confident and breathless pilgrimage of hate. He found himself "trembling and astonished" on the ridge that opens the first view of the orchards of Damascus, kneeling, blinded by the vision of the Risen Christ, asking "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

The swift, disciplined mind of Paul—the Roman citizen, the Jewish scholar, the Hellenist orator—realised now what had barely crossed the vision of the others, that the consequences of the fact of Christ were stupendous; that they were indeed eternal and universal. He saw that the destiny, not of a little nation, but of the whole human race was involved.

For if the followers of Jesus Christ were not (as he had imagined) the blasphemous dupes of a criminal impostor, and if He was indeed the Son of God, they must be the authentic dawn of a new humanity. If they were not the mistaken messengers of a mirage, they must be the outposts of a new Empire. Indeed, after his vision of the Risen Christ on the Damascus Road, he knew himself to be the authoritative herald of a world-wide Kingdom, bearing in his soul the seal of God's calling and on his life the discipline of His will.

What had happened was not even that Paul had found that his own idea of the Messiah was, to his surprise, fulfilled. For he had always anticipated a Jewish liberation by a Hebrew prince; but now, in a flash, that little national stage was swept out of sight; the universe itself became the scene of the drama. *The redemption of humanity was involved.*

In a word, St. Paul argued: God is Lord of all; all God's self is in Jesus Christ—who lived the life of a man on the plane of God's will; Christ has all power in His hands. As the Roman slave, when the price of freedom (*redemptio,* as it is called) is paid, can be freed, and by the process of adoption can actually be made a son of the family; so Christ by His life and death has *redeemed* the slave of sin and made him an adopted son in the family of God. Christ (Paul says) thus lifts us who live in Him into sonship with God. Those who so live are literally a new order of humanity; they are the Kingdom of God.

Paul gave the immense explosive and creative energy of his personality to stating and spreading that revolutionary truth. In stating it he fought to the death all attempts to cramp the new force within any bonds of Jewish nationalism,

of Greek culture, or of Roman law. He caused it to flow in a broadening stream across the world, so that its healing waters should irrigate the soil of all humanity.

Paul uprooted the sapling Gospel from the Jewish walled garden, and planted it out in the soil of the world.

In trying to state his message of the Kingdom, Paul poured out a cataract of paradoxes and scattered words like glittering spray in his passionate desire to express the inexpressible, to show to his hearers "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and to make real to them in all its transcendent wonder "what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." He broke the alabaster box of Judaism and poured out Christ's spikenard for the world.

His language, which ignorance has for long described as that of the legalist and the obscurantist, is now discovered to be precisely the language of the street in his day, the language used in the letters in which the runaway boy wrote home to his parents, the merchant to his client, and the civil servant to his wife.

In spreading the message he set no limits to

his divine ambition. Already the message of the Kingdom had spread from Jerusalem over the country side of Judæa into Syria and the seacoast. Emissaries had borne it to Cyprus and Crete, and in the cosmopolitan metropolis of Antioch-in-Syria Greeks had joined and been admitted to the new Christian Society. This revolutionary epoch-making step was accepted by the Council at Jerusalem. It at once stamped the Church as an inter-racial organisation.

Paul started out on that most daring and brilliant life-campaign which proved to be a turning-point in human history. He carried the Christian evangel across the Roman Empire, from Antioch-in-Syria to Cyprus, across the Taurus Mountains on to the high plateau of populous Asia Minor, through Antioch-in-Pisidia, Lystra and Derbe, away westward to Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus, to Rome itself.

Wherever he passed he quickened souls by his proclamation and planted the Church. He left at the strategic points of the Empire groups of men and women dedicated to Christ and His Kingdom. To these groups he wrote his immortal

missionary letters—to the Church in Philippi, in Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Ephesus, in Galatia.

III

The Christian Society, as outlined in those letters and as it lived in the minds of Paul and his fellow-missionary statesmen and their successors in the first and second centuries,[1] was a spiritual fellowship, dominated by the idea of the Kingdom of God. It was a brotherhood so intimately united with Christ that it was His body, and its members were His members; so filled with the Holy Spirit that its individual members were fitly framed together into His living temple. It was a unity having the mind of Christ so fully and royally that it thought His thoughts and willed His will. And His thought and will were the redemption of men—the coming of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of humanity.

The thoughts and ideas, the bonds, the motives and the aims common to that Christian Society were governed by the principle of the Kingdom

[1] As shown for instance in the Acts, in the letters bearing the names of SS. Paul, John, Peter, Barnabas, Clement, and Ignatius, and in the "Shepherd of Hermas."

of God. Very definitely they were not the bonds or the aims of the man in the street in Antioch or Iconium, in Sardis or Tarsus.

The divisions between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, rich and poor, slave and free were all cancelled in the Church—and nowhere else. They were cancelled, not by doing away with the slave or the poor or the Gentile, but by the discovery of a deeper spiritual unity, a higher common factor, a transcendent single goal. That unity, that factor, that goal lay in God. Men who through Christ knew Him had something in common that made all differences irrelevant.

Whether they met together as the Church for adoration, for intercession and for the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise in communion; or listened to instruction and exhortations; or gave to the weekly offertory for the widows, the sick, the infirm, the poor, the disabled, the prisoner or the brother chained in the mines; or mixed in the common life of the city—in it but not of it—they showed in the world *a new order of life*. They were, in fact, the dawn of a new humanity.

The Christian faith won its way in the Roman world not because it entered an arena in which there were no competitors, for there were, as we

have seen, scores of competing faiths. It triumphed because it and it alone was rooted in Divine Reality and met the whole range of human need. Where the philosopher gave moral maxims to the few, Christianity gave moral power to the multitude. Where sorcerers worked by fear of the world of spirits, Christianity compelled by miracles of healing, by the joy of freedom in the spacious love of God and the strong protecting rule of His holy will. There were many religions; Christianity was a conquering Faith. It linked men into an eternal, supernatural, supernational, catholic brotherhood—the Church of the Redeemed.

IV

Paul taught his churches still to look loyally toward Jerusalem and the Council of the Church there. The last great act of his free life was to assemble the offerings of all the churches in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, and—with a representative deputation from all those churches—to convey the gift to Jerusalem. The new Society had thus learned from the outset to act corporately as one; and to think of Jerusalem as its mother.

But when the Emperor Titus, after that most tremendous siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), tore the city stone from stone, made her temple a rubble heap, and wiped the Jewish State out of existence, the detachment of the Christian Church from Judaism became almost complete. The Christian Society stood out to the world clearly as a separate organisation.

Meanwhile, the missionary expansion of the Church went on, each centre like Ephesus in Asia, or Philippi in Macedonia radiating influence through its surrounding area.

The militant aggressive expansion from the great city centres to the districts round about was so vigorous and swift that a Roman official like Pliny, bewildered by the multitude and influence and stubborn courage of the Christians, plaintively asked his Emperor (Trajan, A.D. 98-117) how he was to deal with the menace he imagined them to be, and declared that they made up the majority of the population in his province of Bithynia. Progress was of course unequal in different places. But a slackening of the expansive energy, the missionary spirit, of the Church began to show itself with steadily increasing effects from the second century onward.

The interest turned from campaigning for fresh conquests to consolidating the positions that had been won. From vehemently proclaiming a redeeming message, the Church turned to the task of defining her creed.

Developments of ritual, organisation and doctrine went on throughout the second century under half a dozen pagan emperors like Hadrian (117-138); Antoninus Pius (138-161), in whose reign Polycarp was murdered in the stadium on the hill that crowns Smyrna (155 or 156); Marcus Aurelius (161-180), who labelled the Christians a self-willed set of fanatics and encouraged a widespread persecution; the dissolute Commodus (180-192), who because he was careless gave the Christians ease from their persecutions; and Septimus Severus (193-211), who instituted a conscientious persecution of the more vigorous Christians of his day.

From this stage through the third century it was clear that the Empire was in a strange dilemma. It could neither ignore Christianity nor crush it; and it did not desire to accept it. The pendulum swung violently from Alexander Severus, who set up a statue of Christ in astonishing company alongside Abraham and Orpheus, to

Decius, who in his passion for restoring the ancient Roman virtues organised in A.D. 250 the most systematic and considered persecution that the Church had yet suffered.

Galerius "the Wild Beast," fifty years after the persecution under Decius, issued his decisive ultimatum. The Christian must, he declared, either worship the ancient gods or die; multitudes preferred to die as martyrs, myriads however elected to live as renegades. Galerius fell ill, and on his deathbed withdrew his edict and sent out his pleading message to the Christians, "Pray for me." The Church lived; purged by the fires, smaller in numbers but stronger in temper.

The fiery trial of persecution was followed by the subtler and deadlier test of favouritism. Constantine (306-337), under whom the old ties of the Empire with Rome ceased, built up a new city at Byzantium which has ever since borne his name. He made the imperial throne still more oriental in its despotism. The one mighty permanent power that he did bring over from the old Empire was that strong system of Roman law which has ever since been the granite foundation of western civilisation.

Constantine became a professed Christian.

The Christian people hailed his declaration with joy and assailed his ears with praise. The Christian Church had captured the Empire. She had won the world of her day, but she was in mortal peril of losing her own soul.

The Cross was on the imperial banner; but the banner was Constantine's. The Cross was on one side of the coins that Constantine minted; but on the reverse of the coin was Mithra. The Emperor set up a great statue of himself holding aloft a cross; but it was after all the cross in his hand, not himself kneeling before it.

Constantine granted religious liberty; then he gave favours to the Church, endowed her and was munificent to her clergy. The Church was thus patronised. The Emperor began to give advice. He called the first Council of the Church in Nicæa. Then he interfered both in government and in doctrine, and at last proceeded to bend the bishops and their congregations to his imperial will.

Simultaneously the discussions on doctrine that had smouldered within the Church broke out into a fierce blaze. The white heat of controversy played on the central problem aroused by the argument, for ever associated with the name of

Arius, which placed Christ between man and God rather than affirmed Him to be absolutely both. The Arian position escaped the difficulties of the divine mystery; but it did so by lowering the whole thought of Christ's person and by partially detaching Him, so to speak, from the Godhead and from humanity.

Against Arius, Athanasius, a young brilliant deacon of the Church, brought the powerful weapons of his passionate dialectic. He affirmed the contradiction which Truth must always present to the mere foot-rule of logic. He laid down the Christian doctrine of the *homo ousios*—of Christ in God—that He was of one essence with Him. It was this great controversy, which flamed intermittently for a century and then continued endlessly in various forms, that led Constantine to call the first great Council of the Christian Church at Nicæa in 325.

At that Council the first creed officially accepted by the Church as a whole—the Nicene Creed as we call it—was formulated and agreed upon. Through the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries general Councils became a regular feature of the life of the Church. At those Councils decisions of high moment were reached and great general

principles established and accepted. But they were again and again degraded by the rancour and vindictive spite of intemperate controversialists, who in their zeal for right thinking forgot the central commandment of Christ that His disciples should love God and one another.

Yet the common people of the Church—though the passion for theological controversy entered the very market place and the home—lived a life that still witnessed to the Kingdom of God. "They recognise each other," said the pagan Cæcilius, "by means of secret marks and signs and love one another almost before they are acquainted." [1] They (by the testimony of pagan writers) faced death during the plague in nursing their fellows, when the pagans ran for their lives leaving their sick to die and their dead unburied in the streets. "See how these Christians love one another" was a sincere tribute of pagan praise before the Church reduced it to a justifiable satire. From the third century to the sixth the Christian folk as a whole were marked out from the non-Christians by their purity of life, truthfulness, courage and generosity; and this not by their own assertion but the repeated admissions of pagan

[1] *Minucius Felix*, ix.

writers. They sang in fellowship joyful hymns like that addressed to Christ written by St. Clement of Alexandria:

Bridle of colts untamed, over our wills presiding;
Wing of unwandering birds, our flight securely guiding;
Rudder of youth unbending,
Firm against adverse shock;
Shepherd, with wisdom tending
Lambs of the royal flock:
Thy simple children bring in one, that they may sing
In solemn lays their hymns of praise
With guileless lips to Christ their King.

Adventurous missionaries carried the faith into new fields. In the first half of the fourth century, for instance, Frumentius and Ædesius penetrated into Africa as far as Ethiopia (Abyssinia); Nina the slave-girl carried the Gospel triumphantly through Georgia; and Gregory the Illuminator evangelised Armenia; while in the same century the Persian Christians founded a great Church on the west coast of India.[1] But the Church made her missionary enterprise a sporadic expression of energy rather than the central feature of her policy.

No single general sweeping judgment can

[1] Four centuries later (883), King Alfred sent gifts to this Indian Church, *v.* Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

therefore be passed on the Christian Church when the Faith had become the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Her gain by capturing the Empire was great, but the loss was immeasurable. If it was an honour that the Emperor should call Councils together it was also a terrible danger, for where the Emperor called he commanded. When Constantine lifted the Church to his side he bound her to him with chains that were none the less shackles because they were gilded. The Church was forced to render unto Cæsar not only the things that were Cæsar's but also the things that were God's. But Athanasius and his colleagues declined to be forced; and, driven into the deserts by heretical emperors, kept alive the fire of the true faith.

The Church gained in solidity and external impressiveness by organising her life so that throughout the Empire she could act in unity. But when the sap of life began to flag the external system concealed the internal decay, without making it good.

The Church gained also in logical completeness by putting her thought about God into creed. But

completeness did not mean clearness. Correct thought began to stand above loyal service.

The Church that was asked to think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, saw its Council of Chalcedon divided into furious gangs of raucous theologians railing at one another, "Turn out the rebels; turn out the murderers; turn out the enemy of God."

The springtime of the Christian Society had passed. The spirit of adventure had flagged, though it never died, for between 370 and 700 the Church advanced in Europe and evangelised large parts of Gaul, Germany, Ireland, and the Balkan peninsula. But the increasing tendency was for the Church to concentrate on defining truth rather than going out with the sword of the Spirit to extend its sway. She became preoccupied with saving her own soul rather than with the proclamation of the Good News of the Christian Evangel to the ends of the earth.

In the early days when she forgot herself in order to carry across the world the message of the Kingdom, she grew miraculously and went on conquering and to conquer. In the later days when she centred her thought on her own power

and privileges a stark menace threatened her very life. She found suddenly that the question was not whether she should increase her power or discuss her creeds—but whether she could, by fighting with all her might, remain alive at all.

For out of the desert of Arabia came the scimitar of Islam.

Books for Further Reading.

The Acts.
The Epistles of St. Paul.
T. R. Glover, *Conflicts of Religion in the Early Roman Empire.* (Methuen.)
T. G. Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul.* (Macmillan.)
Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church.* (John Murray.)
William Cunningham, *The Churches of Asia.* (Macmillan.)
H. N. Bate, *History of the Church to A.D.* 325. (Rivingtons.)

Chapter IV

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

I

FOUR Roman roads flung like javelins from north and south, east and west, centred in the target of the Christian city of Bosra, which, toward the end of the sixth century, lay across Jordan on the debatable south-eastern fringes of the Roman Empire.

Bosra, like many of the border cities, already felt the relaxing of the protective arm that stretched from Constantinople. For the Empire's unpaid soldiers, weakening discipline, decaying *morale,* decreasing trade and enfeebled justice made her authority an insecure shield. The city, nevertheless, placed there on the fertile plateau of the Hauran between Galilee and the Eastern desert, had little to fear from the far-distant Persian power and—she would imagine—still less

from the petty wrangling Arab tribes scattered across the deserts southward for over a thousand miles.

Up the paved Roman road from the south in the eighties of the sixth century came a long stream of camels with merchandise, as camel-caravans had come since the dawn of history.

Perched among the bales on the back of one of the camels squatted a black-eyed eleven-year-old Arab boy, with a wide brow, full lips, a strong nose, and a face somewhat fairer than his swarthy companions. As the tawny caravan of beasts swung up the ancient road, his quick eyes opened with a new wonder. His name was Mohammed. His uncle, Abu Talib, was master of the caravan.

A thousand miles behind the boy lay his birthplace at Mecca, hidden among the sun-scorched hills and mountains of Arabia. From the molten lead waters of the Gulf of Akaba on the west to the hot reaches of the Persian Gulf on the east, the land of his birth was a desert—a shield of dull old-gold, set with tiny emerald oases.

Born a town boy—a Hadesi—nursed in the wholesome Arab manner by a hardy Bedouin woman of the desert, successively shepherd lad, camel-boy and Meccan, as familiar with the flat-

roofed, deep-shadowed houses of the city as with the black tents of the wandering Bedouin, young Mohammed was an Arab of the Arabs.

His father had died before he was born.[1] The sensitive child had lost his mother while he was a little boy, and when still a lad his adored grandfather, under whose care he had been brought up. He was now travelling in the trading caravan of his uncle.

When the boy passed under the shadow of the great walls of Bosra, into the straight, spacious, colonnaded streets of this already decaying city, he saw such power and wealth, such majestic and beautiful buildings, such evidence of the pomp and glory of empire as he had never dreamed could exist. Through the arches of the greatest of the buildings he heard the chanting of black-robed men and would doubtless see the strange ritual of the official worship of the Empire—the worship of the Christian Church.

What Mohammed's inquiring mind drank in through his eyes and ears in those days cannot be known. There is no evidence that Mohammed then or ever heard the true Gospel story or the first-hand experience of a redeemed man; for

[1] Mohammed's birth, A.D. 570.

his whole record in the Koran is based on legendary gospels.

Young Mohammed went home from Bosra on the long trail south with his brain full of new thoughts and recollections of the city life of the Empire. Years later, as a young man, he came again to Bosra leading another caravan of merchandise. As for the second time he passed southward out of the city on the return journey neither he nor the Christian Church could possibly guess what was indeed the truth, that two God-given opportunities for inspiring a new and virile commander of aggressive Christianity had passed, and that when Mohammed's name was next heard in Bosra it would be as the herald of the fiercest, the most skilled and the most implacable foe that the Christian Church and the Kingdom of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has ever known.

II

Mohammed coursed southward on his second journey from Bosra ahead of his caravan to Mecca to carry the story of his successful enterprise as a trader to the widow Khadijah, who

owned the caravan. His personality compelled her affections, and her wealth and seniority made it possible for her to woo and marry him. He now had wealth and position and lived a quiet life in Mecca for some fifteen years till, in A.D. 610, whilst he was in retirement in a mountain cave near Mecca for the customary days of fasting and meditation, an ecstatic and dreadful vision came upon him. For long the meaning of this and succeeding visions was unintelligible, and he even believed himself to be demon-possessed.

At length, out of the mists of his visions, came the great dogma of the unity of God, "La ilaha illa 'llahu." "There is no God but God." Then followed his tremendous assertion, "Muhammadur rasulu 'llah," "Mohammed is the Apostle of God." For three years he confided his visions in secret to his wife, his friend Abu Bakr, his slave Zaid and a few others. Then he came out and proclaimed his doctrine from a neighbouring hillside in a sermon that at once thrilled and disquieted his kinsmen and townsfolk, at the very time when from Rome the Gospel was being carried by St. Augustine to the savage Saxons of Britain.

It disquieted them, for Mecca was the home

of the sacred black stone in the Kaaba, where the gods Uzza and Lat dwelt. And by the teaching of the unity of God the axe was laid at the root of Arabian polytheism. Persecution followed Mohammed's sermon and his subsequent teaching, but although on one occasion he compromised with the local deities, yet under obloquy and threat he held steadily to the faith that had possessed him. The ostracism and hatred grew till, at length, an invitation from the northern city of Medina led to his flight thither, with his followers.[1]

At Medina the first Mosque rose—the earliest building erected for Islamic worship and teaching. Medina became the first Moslem city. War was waged from Medina on the Meccans. At the decisive battle of Badr—where Medina had 300 and Mecca some 700 men—Mohammed prayed in ecstatic fervour, "Victory, O Lord—Victory! Paradise for the Believer who dies—Glory for the Believer who lives—death and hell-fire for the idolators." In that prayer lay the war-aims of Islam.

The battle of Badr was won. The total united casualties were only sixty-three, but it was a turning-point in history. Steadily and incessantly

[1] The Hejira, A.D. 622.

Mohammed drew in the nomad tribes of the desert. His banner began to be the very symbol of success. With the Arab, above all men, "nothing succeeds like success." His power again and again hung in the balance; but the passion of his faith in his mission and the genius of his indomitable will triumphed.

At last, with sublime audacity, he sent out his messengers beyond the broad borders of Arabia, to Egypt and Abyssinia, and even to the Roman Emperor Heraclius and to Persia, to call upon kings and emperors alike to acknowledge the oneness of God. The attitude of Abyssinia was amiable but detached. Egypt cringed. Heraclius—in the Roman manner—ignored the message. The Persian court at its capital, Ctesiphon, was furious at these insolent commands to a glorious, ancient, cultivated civilisation from an illiterate prophet-kinglet, reigning in a camel-reeking town of mud houses.

Mohammed meanwhile brought Mecca under his sway, drew the tribes under his authority, till, from the Indian Ocean to Syria and from the Persian Gulf to Sinai, he was the accepted Apostle of Allah. He began to gather an army for wider conquests when fever struck him, his

strength ebbed and he died.[1] A passionate and sincere devotee to the great idea of the oneness and greatness of God, Mohammed had used ruthless cruelty and unscrupulous methods in forcing his idea on the world. In his personal life, power led to moral degeneracy. As he lay waiting for death he murmured the repentant confession of his own erring humanity, "Pardon, Lord, pardon."

III

Abu Bakr, his first Caliph (successor), checked disunion by an immediate order to his armies to march northward. Rebellion was suppressed. The disciplined army of 18,000, flaming with zeal for the spread of the creed and the conquest of the land, went into Persia under the generalship of Khâlid, and put three successive disorganised, undisciplined, feeble-hearted armies to the sword. The Persian king died.

At the capital of Persia and in the court the miserable pretenders to the throne, engaged in assassination, massacre and plotting, disunion and revolution, were suddenly struck cold by a despatch from the Moslem general—

[1] A.D. 632.

"By force or goodwill you shall accept our law, and it shall be given you by men who lust after death as much as ye lust after life."

Action followed the threat. Khâlid in that one swift crowded hour crippled the Persian rule, brought the Christian Arabs under the Moslem yoke, and enforced the thought, faith, and moral code of Islam on an immense territory. Four Moslem armies now swept into Syria, while Khâlid swung back from Persia, to make a flank attack on the Imperial forces of Constantinople, and Bosra fell under the rule of the Crescent. Then like a tidal wave Islam engulfed Alexandria and Jerusalem and finally smashed the Persian rule. The last successor of a hundred Persian Emperors died a refugee at the hand of a peasant. Soon the waves of Islam swept over to Damascus, and northward over Armenia, while simultaneously the tide ran westward along the North African coast to Carthage.

The Caliphs[1] moved their court to Damascus and then to the Bagdad of the Arabian Nights. The campaigns under Ugba pressed westward

[1] The first Caliphs (that is the "successors" to Mohammed) were Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman.

through Egypt along the northern fringes of the Sahara to the Atlantic. "Great God," exclaimed Ugba, as he stood on the shore of the Atlantic, "if I were not stopped by this raging sea, I would go on to the nations of the West, preaching the unity of Thy Name, and putting to the sword those who would not submit." The Moslem armies then crossed the Mediterranean into Spain.

Just a hundred years after the death of the prophet the tremendous and decisive seven days' battle at Tours was fought in the fields of France between Islam and Christian forces under the Frank, Charles Martel.

The Empire of the Caliphs now stretched from Egypt to the plateaux of Persia and from Aden to the Taurus Mountains, but Asia Minor, behind her buttress of mountain ranges, remained under the nerveless rule of Constantinople.

IV

The Mohammedan Empire had become a mighty rule, but it had no redeeming effect on the civilisation under its sway. The Imperial Palace at Bagdad was a corrupt and filthy glitter

of opulent evil. Extortion was the system of taxation. Slaves and riches drained in from the Empire to Bagdad. The Holy War of Islam had become an organised system of loot. As the Court left the desert for the river, Medina for Bagdad, the simplicity of the wholesome life of the spare Arab was replaced by gross and enervating opulence.

The effect of Islamic rule on the peoples under its sway will be examined in detail later.[1] Here we are concerned with the ideas that inspired the Moslem and in particular the forces of Islam as a power in civilisation. What is the relation of Islam to the building of the City of God upon earth?

Forged in the fire of devotion to one unseen Creator, and sharpened as a sword to slay the hydra-headed tribal godlets of Arabia, Islam set up an absolute doctrine of the Kingdom of God.

What was that idea, and in what did it differ from the Christian idea of the Kingdom?

As against the perplexing chaos of the competing worships of the desert demi-gods of the Arabian tribes, and in distinct challenge to the growing saint-worship of the Church, Mohammed

[1] See Chapters V-VI.

rang out with the clearness of a simple, absolute, authoritative bugle call—"Allah is one; Allah is great; Allah is Omnipotent."

"Allah is merciful and compassionate," said the Prophet. The mercy of Allah is, however, favouritism shown toward the faithful by a benevolent despot rather than the righteous mercy of a Holy Father toward a repentant son.

This high and absolute doctrine of the sovereignty of God is reflected in Mohammed's teaching about man. If God is despot and not father, man is slave and not son. He is a soldier under absolute discipline, not a child in the ordered household. There is in orthodox Islam a revelation of God's being, but none of His relation with man. Instead of a moral redemption to be enjoyed, there is merely a law to be obeyed—and that law not necessarily a righteous one. There is a submission of the will, not a rebirth of the soul.

The moral system that follows from this is, then, necessarily expressed in detailed laws delivered and interpreted. Islam does not repose on a freely given obedience to great principles of action. The rules that govern the life of the

Moslem are a system of minute legalism controlling every action.

The word "Islam" means submission. The system of Islam wields all the fascination of an absolute authority that lays down simple rules and calls for confident obedience. A stirring appeal to *l'homme moyen sensuel,* the normal virile man who desires satisfaction for his senses and the discipline of a simple rule of life, is made by the simple creed that is at once a faith, a bond of union and a battle-cry, that creed of the oneness and greatness of God and of His prophetic medium Mohammed; by the eternal authority of unalterable rule laid down in the Koran; by the daily drill of the uniform prayer-motions; by the magic of the chanted rhythm of words; by the clear proud minaret call of the muezzin—"Come to prayer—prayer is better than sleep"; by the self-discipline of the annual fast of Ramadân; by the freemasonry of the faithful; and by the decisive law of the scimitar for the infidel, loot for the victorious warrior and a Paradise of maidens and feasting for the heroic dead. Mohammed standardised the natural Arab of the seventh century as the measure of the will of God for man.

The law thus laid down is civil and religious.

It is the law of the State, enforced by the State, but its whole sanction is in the "suras" of Mohammed which came verbally through him from Allah. This oneness of religion and state-law means that conversion from Islam to another faith is treachery to the State and is logically punishable by death.

The whole system is thus based essentially on the traditions and the practice of Mohammed. "Allah is great; Allah is one; and Mohammed is His prophet." Mohammed washed, spoke, dressed in such a way; gave such and such divinely revealed orders. These "suras" are embodied in the Koran, which to the Moslem is the absolute, verbally unalterable, eternal Word of God. Civilisation, therefore, is stereotyped, standardised, cast in a mould. Islam is logically incapable of reform. As Lord Cromer, who knew Islam at its heart in its theory and its practice, said, "Reformed Islam is Islam no longer."

But, if the law comes from Allah it does not need reform, is the logical reply of Islam. What then are the principles of Islam as governing civilisation, leaving aside the question as to how far the civilisation lives up to its principles?

They are, roughly, the absolute power of the

Caliph—the successor to Mohammed—*i.e.* despotism without representative government; the consequent absence of freedom; permanent slavery tempered by kindness; polygamy and concubinage, and the system of the veil and the harem, tempered again by kindness to the women who have, however, no rights; temperance; a repudiation of theft, falsehood, murder and adultery; the world-brotherhood of Moslems; propaganda by the sword; and the Jihâd, or holy war for the extermination of the infidel.

If such a system is Islam, and if it is incapable of reform, then civilisation under Islam must be evil in itself and can have no principle of recovery or progress in itself.

There can be no enduring civilisation based on an unchangeable law "divinely" revealed through the one prophet of the One God, when that prophet was a man whose active career began in highway robbery in the month then consecrated in Arabia to unbroken peace; who elevated plunder to a religious act; who butchered captives all through a day, completing the task by torch-light, and took that night Rihana, a Jewish captive girl, as his bond-slave; who debased the Arab code of purity and honour—a code which itself

permitted polygamy and brigandage—by marrying a captive woman Safia three days after the death of her relatives, by committing incest in making his adopted son divorce his wife and immediately marrying her himself, and by robbing pilgrims on their way to Mecca; and who then proclaimed divine "suras", declaring these acts to be the will of Allah.

As W. H. T. Gairdner has said—

> "As incidents in the life of an Arab conqueror, the tales of raiding, private assassinations and public executions, perpetual enlargements of the harem, and so forth, might be historically explicable and therefore pardonable; but it is another matter that they should be taken as a setting forth of the moral ideal for all time."

V

What, in contrast with Islam, are the principles of Christianity as a plan for civilisation—again leaving aside the question how far a normally Christian civilisation approximates to its ideal?

The oneness of God is as absolute in the faith of Christ as in that of Mohammed. But unlike the Allah of Islam, the Christian God is not solitary. Islam strikes one clear note in the music

of God's nature; Christianity strikes a rich, full, perfect chord. And the unity of the chord is not less but is higher than the unity of the single note. Just as the leg or arm is not a true unity but a fragment, whereas the body made up of all the members is an absolute and perfect unity; so the Allah of Islam is not a true unity but a fragment—a broken torso of God, whereas in the Christian Faith we discover the fulness of the infinite stature of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, transcendent above man, yet immanent in him, and "in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

How, then, does the system of Christianity contrast with that of Islam? No system of a myriad rules is possible or necessary where God is Father and not a "Sultan in the Sky."

Under the Fatherhood of God, the freedom of man becomes the fuller as his obedience to God grows more complete. He is the God "whom to serve is to reign." [1]

The principles of the Kingdom are not in a code of law, but in the heart of the redeemed man

[1] The original text of the clause in the Collect, which we translate "Whose service is perfect freedom," is "Cui servire regnare est."

himself. Goodness, purity, humility, joy, confidence, love, trust, truth, honour, honesty, loyalty, and fearlessness are qualities that belong to the Christian Kingdom. Under Christ the whole free life of womanhood becomes an integral part of civilisation and not a subservient addendum. This new, rich humanity living in Christ, stands as the first-fruits of the universal brotherhood of God's children.

All the principles of Christian civilisation finally trace back, then, not to immutable laws revealed by a dead Prophet, but to a life lived by a Risen Saviour. And the supreme strength of the Christian faith is that the resources of God—His power, holiness, love, justice—are immediately available for man in the living Christ.

Islam is a great advance on the animism that it superseded; but it is an advance into a *cul de sac.* It leads up a blind alley beyond which progress is only possible by breaking down the very wall of "suras" that makes it Islam.

Christianity, on the other hand, because it is not in itself merely a system of thought or a book or an organisation, but is a life and a force, has (although its professed followers may fail miserably a thousand times) at its heart in its living

Christ the eternal power of redeeming the blunders and erasing the sins of the past, and of leading human life

"On to the City of God."

Books for Further Reading.

The Korân.
D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism.* (Williams & Norgate.)
T. R. W. Lunt, *The Story of Islam.* (United Council for Missionary Education.)
W. H. T. Gairdner, *The Reproach of Islam.* [Out of print, but obtainable from Mission House Libraries.]
The Vital Forces of Christianity and Islam. [Edited by J. H. Oldham.] (Milford.)

Chapter V

NEW LIFE FOR OLD

I

GEOGRAPHY shapes though it does not control history. For Asia Minor geography decreed two things that have affected all the history of the Near East, and had a special influence when the Caliphs were building the Islamic Empire with its capital at Bagdad.

The first decree was that Asia Minor should be the Bridge between East and West. The possession of the Anatolian plateau has always been vital to any extensive Empire in the Nearer East. Geography again decreed, by building the mighty rampart of the Taurus Mountains, that Anatolia —the vast plateau that covers most of Asia Minor —should never be conquered from the south. The Caliphs of Bagdad were thus in a cleft stick of fate. The control of Anatolia was, for them,

strategically both essential and impossible. For while the first decree forced them to try to conquer Asia Minor, the second foiled their repeated attempts. The Caliphs flung their forces from the south again and again on that Taurus breakwater and through the bottle-neck of the Cilician Gates. They overran parts of the plateau and from the seventh century to the early years of the ninth hammered again and again at the gates of Constantinople.[1] But they failed because the waters of invasion could not flow northward in conquering force past the Taurus Range over the hinterland of the plateau.

The final relief of the civilisation of Byzantium from the persistent threat of the Caliphs came through a new invader—the Turk—from whose rule Asia Minor has never since been free. The Turks and the Mongols poured in from the north-east across the Caucasian frontiers from the plateaux of Central Asia.

On the crest of the first breaker of this threatening tide of Asiatic humanity came the Seljuk Turks. They were, at the outset, barbarians whose crudity was qualified by Persian influence and by the creed of Islam. Capable of absorb-

[1] *E.g.* A.D. 668, 674 and 833.

ing and modifying the characteristics of the civilisation over which they swept, they were also able to keep their racial identity.

When William the Conqueror was subduing England, the Seljuk Turks fought and defeated the armies of Constantinople in Asia Minor. By 1080 they were in Nicæa, and the creed "Allah is great and Mohammed is His prophet" was called over the roof tops of the city in which the great Nicene Christian creed was drafted.

Settling upon Konia (Iconium), the strategic and commercial centre of the plateau, as their capital they spread their derivative civilisation over Anatolia. They developed an architecture and a decorative art that have a spirit and a grace of their own.[1] They thus split the command of Nearer Asia with the Caliph of Bagdad. Although they held rule on the Bridge of Asia Minor, the Seljuk Turks never commanded its approaches either at the Hellespont, where the East-

[1] The blended strength and grace of line and elaboration of detail in the ruins of their palace at Konia (Iconium), the wonderful blue—so radiant and yet so rich—of the tiles in the dome of their Mosque there, and the amazing intricate beauty of the geometrical design on those tiles, gave me an impression of an art of oriental richness yet of great clarity and precision, partly Persian in its inspiration but modified in a distinctive way.

ern Roman Empire still endured, or on the Persian Gulf which was under the Caliphate.

Then a new enemy came upon the Seljuks, which by its offensive against the Turk helped to sustain the Roman power at Constantinople for centuries. In the very hour when the Seljuk Turks stormed into Nicæa and threatened the Eastern bastion of Christianity at Constantinople, a tremendous tide—unique in history—began to surge across Europe from Britain and France. That movement of glory and shame—the Crusades—began.

In 1097 the Crusaders swept the Seljuks out of Nicæa, and, pouring across Asia Minor, had by July 1099 bathed the streets of Jerusalem in blood.

The Crusaders rolled forward across Nearer Asia borne by the impetus of a bewildering welter of forces: religious passion blended with the sheer love for a good fight, a steady undercurrent of race antagonism, the instinctive battle of Western Christendom with the menace of Oriental Islam, and the desire to keep open the highways of commerce.

For two full centuries the swaying struggle went on. When the fluttering banners and the curved

scimitars of Saladin swept into the streets of Jerusalem in 1187, and the call of the creed of Allah was again heard from the Mosque of Omar across the Holy City, the Crusaders began to fight a losing battle that ended in ignominy a century later when they were thrust into the sea from their last stronghold of Acre.

Suddenly, however, as though a dam had burst in the mountains of the Caucasus under the pressure of an irresistible flood-tide of humanity, the wild Mongols raced down in a torrent from Central Asia, coursing over Asia Minor,[1] smashing the defences of the last Bagdad Caliph in 1258 and engulfing all Syria and Palestine.

Some thousands of the more cultivated Turks eluded the blind and dreadful pressure of the Mongol by fleeing toward the shores of the Black Sea, at first to Erzerum and then to Angora.

A little bodyguard of Turks, called the Osmanlis or Ottoman Turks after Osman (1289-1326) their first great ruler, rallied, buffeted the Mongols a reeling blow, and developed their power in Asia Minor slowly through the fourteenth century. They have ruled the land ever since. The mantle of the Prophet was transferred

[1] Under Jenghis Khan in 1219.

from the Arab to the Turk (and thus from Bagdad to Anatolia) when Sultan Selim I. in 1517, marching triumphantly into Egypt, took Cairo and made the last Abbasid Caliph pass on to him the proud title that means "successor" to Mohammed.

The Ottomans changed human history by the capture of Constantinople in 1453. After the Emperor Constantine had been slain as he defended the last rampart of Constantinople, and the city had fallen into the hands of Islam, the ancient routes of traffic with the East were practically closed. So Columbus and Vasco da Gama, searching for new ways to the East by the sea, discovered America and revealed Africa; while India was opened to Dutch and British ships. The commerce of Europe forsook the camel track for the long trail of the ocean.

The fall of Constantinople, which seemed at first sight to be so great a blow to Christian Europe, led thus, by the paradox of history, to the starving of Nearer Asia.

II

The Ottoman Empire, from that period onward, covered Nearer Asia from Constantinople

to Mesopotamia and to the frontiers of Arabia and Egypt. By its extension and consolidation it became a museum of peoples and a mosaic of religions. The peoples are Turkish, Arabic and Armenian; Jewish, Anatolian and Syrian; Kurdish and Greek, intermingled with Circassians, Druzes, and a full dozen other minor groups. The religions include Islam, Christianity (Greek, Armenian, Jacobite, Nestorian and Chaldean), and Judaism.

The fringe-lands on the fertile coasts of Asia Minor are largely Greek and Christian. The plateau of Anatolia is Turkish and Mohammedan. The tumbled mountains between the Black Sea and the Euphrates are Armenian—mostly Christian but sometimes Mohammedan. The Syrian hills and coastal plain are mainly Semitic and Mohammedan, but contain one of the most motley racial mixtures in the world.[1] All through

[1] In 1914 I called in for an afternoon visit at a house close to the Dog River by Beirut near the ancient Hittite-Syrian road. The host was an Austrian with Scottish blood; his wife was a Christian Jewess. Other callers—equally accidental—on the same afternoon were two Americans, an Irish lady with a Syrian husband, a Welshman, and two granddaughters of a King of Abyssinia (partly German in blood), both of whom had married Syrian husbands.

history Syria and Palestine—as the corridor of the mingling traffic to and from Rome, Greece and Egypt, Anatolia and Armenia, Babylonia, Assyria, Mesopotamia and Persia—contain relics of all these races and have a curious Crusader blend added.

The Greeks are the modernists of the Empire, and the fishers, traders and merchantmen of the Near East. They are the middlemen, who in Smyrna and other ports transport the dates and figs, the almonds and olives, the carpets and silver craftsmanship of Persia and Damascus to the West, transmitting simultaneously the gramophone, the sewing machine and the manufactured fabrics of the West to the East. In the village it is almost always the Greek who keeps the little local "store."

The violent contrast between the modern spirit of the coast-Greek and the primitive culture of the Turkish peasant came home vividly when I watched one day on the Anatolian plateau men driving ploughs that were shaped precisely like those used when Paul crossed that same land; and two days later, on the front at Smyrna, I saw a gleaming white cinema with aggressive posters

announcing in great Greek capital letters "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."

Paradoxically enough in the Turkish Empire where most of the people are called "Turks" there are few true, pure-bred Turks in the sense of membership of that Turanian race which poured down from Central Asia through the defiles of Armenia. The harems of city-Turkey have for centuries been replenished with the conquered slave-women of Africa, Greece, Bulgaria, Armenia, Mesopotamia and Arabia. These women have been the mothers of a race that is called Turkish. But in its veins runs the blood of a score of peoples.

The so-called peasant "Turk" of the Anatolian plateau is in truth no Turk. He has adopted the Turkish language and the religion of Arabia; but he is revealed by the conical, sugar-loaf shape of his head, the curve of his nose and of his boots, and by the very arrangement of his house, to be the true child of the peasant whose form is sculptured on ancient Hittite monuments and described by the Greek and the Roman who governed him. He is the same peasant whom Paul and Barnabas met as they crossed that same plateau—the kindly, plodding, stolid, uninventive, courteous, religiously

emotional, enduring Anatolian. Hittite and Persian, Greek, Roman and Turk have alternately protected, exploited and oppressed him; the one thing that has never come his way is the opportunity to govern himself.

This "Turkish" peasant is one of the most forlorn of living creatures. Uneducated and unorganised, with no voice in the shaping of public opinion; conscript for compulsory service for the twenty best years of his life, and perpetually called up from his village, either to hold down and destroy the Greek or Armenian or Arab whom he would willingly let alone, or to perish in fighting in European wars which have no relevance to his own life; grossly overtaxed on an inequitable system administered by corrupt and oppressive officials; unable to trust any of his leaders; ground to powder between the upper millstone of a brutal and grandiose Turkish Imperialism and the nether millstone of local tyranny; loathed by other nations as the instrument of a despotism under which he himself suffers agonies—the Anatolian Turk is in fact a subject for pity rather than for hate.

Greatly superior to the Turk, both in mind and in physique, is the Circassian who has crossed the Caucasus from Europe to Asia under the

pressure of Russian expansion. Half a million of these splendid warriors have settled in the Turkish Empire and everywhere have shown real aptitude for farming, commerce, and governmental administration.

The Kurds are both European and Asiatic. A composite race, they live in the mountainous uplands from which the Tigris and Euphrates draw their waters. European in origin, they have (especially among their southern tribes) blended with the Syrian and Arab. Many of them are semi-nomads, descending toward the plains in the winter to mingle with the northern Arabs and climbing again to the cooler highlands in the summer. They are Shiite Moslems in religion; but their precise religious practices, like their racial mixture, vary widely in different tribes. The Kurds have blended during their historic wanderings the practices of paganism, Christianity and Islam.

Spread throughout the cities of Asia Minor are the Armenian people whose central homeland is in the highland valleys folded between the Pontic mountains south-east of the Black Sea and the Anti-Taurus mountains that frown over northern Syria. Sheltered by the mountain barriers,

isolated from the masses of Mohammedanism by the Christian faith, and unified by persecution, the Armenian people have maintained a great purity of national type. Like the Scot in the British Empire, the Armenians have a highland home yet have spread in all directions and have generally come into places of influence by shrewd ability. Adventurous yet careful business men in temperament, they leave the unimaginative and sluggish Turk far behind in the race for wealth. Ninety per cent of the inland commerce of Asia Minor was in Armenian hands before the massacres of 1915. Combining swiftness of intellect with tenacity of temper, the Armenian is voluble and imaginative. His literature burns with patriotic fire and is full of rich descriptions of the towering majesty of his mountains and the wonderful beauty of his valleys and lakes. In sharp contrast with the Turk, he combines moral courage and strength of purpose with a rough manner and a lack of natural courtesy. He is astute in business, often to the point of craftiness. The Turk at once fears and hates the unmistakable commercial and intellectual superiority of the Armenian. The fact that during the massacres in Adana and Tarsus in 1909 the Turks destroyed

scores of mechanical American reapers, rakes, etc.—the property of the prosperous and enterprising Armenian farmers—opens a window both into the mind of the Turk and the conquering progressive energy of the Armenian.

The Druzes of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon are a high type of unorthodox Moslem, who avoid polygamy and are pure monotheists; while their neighbours the Maronites are a little Christian people who have retained in an astonishing degree their purity of race and religion. These Druzes and Maronites are simply types of a whole range of infinitesimal peoples like the Nestorians and Chaldeans of the Mesopotamian border and the Jacobites and Samaritans. Isolated by natural conditions and by religious and racial separatism, these and similar peoples help to make up the tesselated pavement of religion and race in the Turkish Empire.

III

An Empire that contains so many races must govern them either by tyrannous power or by drawing them into co-operative constructive effort. It is not too much to say that the policy

of the Turkish Empire, whenever it has had sufficient initiative to exercise a policy, has run on the lines of destroying the races that were not Turkish and eradicating the religions that were not Islam.

The administration of the Turkish Empire, which has always been despotic, during recent centuries has been slowly destructive of all initiative, partly from sheer executive lethargy but still more from the essentially vicious lack of responsibility and the low moral standard that runs through the whole governmental system.

The ineradicable Turkish love of precedent led the Ottoman Turks to found their Empire on the despotic Byzantine system that they displaced. To that secular oriental tyranny they have added the theocratic rule of Allah's representative, the Caliph.

The Osmanlis (or Ottoman Turks) are themselves a small exclusive alien governing class who blend inefficiency, tyranny, corruption and lassitude in equal degrees, and have spread those evils throughout the Empire. As a result, the idea of public service as a definite calling for the sake of the country or the city or the village hardly exists. A vast emigration has consequently carried some

A CAMEL CARAVAN TRAVELING TO TARSUS
The Ancient Road through the Cilician Pass of the Taurus Mountains

of the best elements of the Turkish Empire into America.

The central failure of Turkish government is, in fact, less one of system than of character, though the two are closely interrelated. The essence of efficient government is interdependence; the secret of interdependence lies in mutual confidence; and the foundation-stone of confidence is personal character. Defects of character, especially in matters of fidelity to trust and public-spirited service, inevitably create paralysis and tyranny in administration. They have done this to the full in the body of the Turkish Empire.

The fact that the need is for moral character rather than simple education or training alone is revealed in the recent history of the Turkish Empire. For the whole issue has not been improved by giving control to efficient educated leadership. When in 1908 the Young Turk party, that had worked its propaganda for years from Paris and had moved its headquarters thence to Salonica, got control of two Army Corps and seized the reins of Government as "the Committee of Union and Progress," high hopes were raised of a new era for the Turkish Empire, for

the leaders were educated men belonging to cosmopolitan civilisation.

In the result, however, it proved that a lethargic despotism was simply transformed into a more efficient tyranny issuing in horrors greater than any that had stained even the blood-soaked records of the past.

The Committee of Union and Progress, which has ruled since 1908, had before it two rival programmes.

The one was Pan-Turanianism[1] which stands on the negative side for the elimination or absorption of the non-Turkish elements in the Empire. It has also aimed, on the positive side, at the expansion of that Empire in order to make it include the many millions of Turks within what was the Russian Empire. The advocates of this policy would even surrender the non-Turanian province of Arabia to secure on balance the enormous gain of spreading the Ottoman rule over Turanian populations that cover much of what was Russia and run across Central Asia to the passes of the Himalayas and the frontiers of China.

[1] *Turan* is a Persian word for the Turkish highland. *Turanian* roughly means *Turkish*.

The other policy, Pan-Islamism, stands for the suppression or elimination of all the non-Islamic elements in the Turkish Empire, and for the extension of Turkish rule over all Moslems.

Islam is, in theory, a political as well as a religious fellowship. The Caliph is the Sultan as well as the Pope. The pilgrimage railway from Damascus to Medina was one move in the policy of linking up Constantinople with Mecca, strengthening the union of the temporal and spiritual power of the Sultan-Caliph. Obviously the whole Pan-Islamic idea of advancing the Turkish rule from a religious headship to a political lordship over all Islam gives an instant threat to whatever other government rules in Tripoli, Egypt, Persia, Afghanistan, or Northern India. If Turkey gained sufficient military prestige over the powers governing in those places Pan-Islamism would become a tremendous factor in world-politics.

The massacres and deportations of Christians practised during the Great War were themselves an attempt to carry out a vile and cynical negative side of both the Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic ideas. The atrocities of 1915 and onward, committed during the Great War by Turkey in

Smyrna, Anatolia, Armenia, North-West Persia, the Lebanon and Syria, were an effort to exterminate a whole nation without distinction of age or sex.

The evidence of the massacres [1] has been closely scrutinised by some of the most critical and judicially trained historical minds in Europe and America.

A single typical picture may be caught in the protest sent by four German educational missionaries in Aleppo (October 8, 1915) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin:

> In the compounds next door to our school (say the German educational missionaries), . . . there are girls and women and children practically naked, some lying on the ground, others stretched between the dead and breathing their last breath.
>
> Out of 2000 to 3000 peasant women from the Armenian plateau who were brought here in good health (their husbands and fathers had already been massacred), only forty or fifty skeletons are left. The prettier ones are the victims of their gaolers' lust; the plain ones succumb to blows, hunger and thirst. . . . Every day more than a hundred corpses are carried out of Aleppo.

[1] *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.* Document presented to Viscount Grey by Viscount Bryce. Laid before the Houses of Parliament as an official paper. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.)

> All this happens under the eyes of high Turkish officials. There are forty or fifty emaciated phantoms crowded into the compound opposite our school. They are women out of their mind; they have forgotten how to eat; when one offers them bread, they throw it aside with indifference. They only groan and wait for death.

Multiply the horrors of that scene by a thousandfold. See men shot and hacked to pieces by the ten thousand. Picture women with child driven with whips along the road till they fall by the roadside and die in giving birth to infants who are at once slain. Imagine gentle trained nurses, graduates of European and American hospitals, driven out into the country to die, raped under the lust of their loathsome masters, or, if plain, beaten and starved to death—and we still fall short of an historically accurate view of the realised horrors of that systematic deportation and butchery.

These happenings stand out as exceptional only in degree. They are of a piece with the consistent policy of the Turkish Empire throughout the centuries. To a world whose future is bound up with the condition of Nearer Asia, they are objects of primary concern. It is not possible to contemplate a future in which the

persecuted peoples of Nearer Asia will be thrust back into the furnace of that hell.

IV

There are forces, however, at work within the Ottoman Empire and affecting all its peoples which have in themselves, if developed and given free expression, the power to redeem the whole civilisation of Nearer Asia.[1] The reverberation of the explosion that brought the old *régime* toppling to the ground and that threw the Young Turk party into supreme power awakened the young manhood of the Turkish Empire. Belief was quickened in the revival of the Empire's glories in a new form. Hope sprang into being. Apathy dropped from men like a cloak, and they stood on the alert awaiting direction from the new leadership.

When, however, the Committee of Union and Progress failed to produce Paradise out of Chaos, reaction swiftly followed. When the old local oppression, the financial "squeeze," the corrupt administration, the grinding of the faces of the

[1] The forces working in the Arab and the Jew will be dealt with in Chapters VI. and VII.

people by the official class still went on, multitudes of the young men sank back into a lethargy more hopeless than before. For their cynicism was intensified by having seen the promise of dawn end in eclipse.

On the other hand, many of the men who are steadied in their judgment by the deeper knowledge, the wider horizons, the moral stamina that have been given to them by fuller education, still hold to a belief in the possibility of a Renaissance in Nearer Asia. These men realise that the failure was inevitable, because the Committee of Union and Progress simply had not to their hand in the Turkish Empire (and for that matter in themselves) the moral fibre that would hold together the fabric of a new constitution on higher lines.

These stronger few also believe in spite of failure that, given sufficient time and training, the people of the Turkish Empire can develop an ordered life founded on justice and freedom. These are largely men who as students have come under the continuous educational influence of those schools and colleges which the missionary statesmanship of America, Britain and Germany have erected throughout the Empire. There

is not in the world any more highly efficient body of educational institutions than these Colleges which in some three or four cases ought justly to be called Universities. The fact that there are thousands of graduates of these Colleges of all races in Nearer Asia,[1] is one of the most hopeful elements in the whole situation in the Near East.

These men now also thoroughly realise that, if any such dream of a renascent Nearer Asia is to be translated into reality, the life of woman must be changed. It was a young Oriental who described the life of woman in the Moslem system as the life of "a frog at the bottom of a deep well." The changed attitude of the men is revealed in the story of the young Egyptian Bey who recently, on hearing an old Mohammedan sheikh declare that they did not desire their girls to stay long at school, flashed out, "No! that is past. Our country can never be great till our women are properly taught."

That saying represents the most progressive revolutionary factor in the whole outlook of the Ottoman Empire. It means that the world-wide movement for the freedom of woman to develop

[1] More detail as to their work will be found in Chapter VIII.

and to express her personality, a movement which is powerful in Tokio and Canton as well as in New York and London, is actively leavening civilisation in Nearer Asia where the seclusion and swaddling of the life of woman has been made at once a religious command and a political policy. The fact that in 1914 the Imperial University at Stamboul opened its doors to women is a symbol of a new attitude of government policy and of a strong movement of the general mind. The Constantinople College for girls, which is the leading educational institution in the Near East for womanhood, has witnessed before the war, and in a highly intensified way during the war, a rapidly increasing enrolment of students.[1]

The desire of the younger men and women alike is to replace the cramped, sensuous, soulless, stifled life of the harem by the companionship, the free play of pure affection, the happy discipline—in a word, the love—that creates home

[1] In 1916 there were 290 girls, 63 being Turks (14 supported by the Government itself); in 1917 the enrolment was 400. This College is the outgrowth of a High School founded in 1871 by the Congregational Women's Board of Missions of America. It is now controlled by an independent Board of its own and supported interdenominationally.

life as it is known at its best in Europe and America.

That yearning, as felt from the side of woman herself, has received expression at once eloquent and precise from Ulviye Hanum, who represents a wide-spread and organised movement for women's rights in Nearer Asia. She says of the women for whom she stands:—

> "Love in any true sense is a stranger in our homes. Respect, companionship are outside of our experience. Yet we have the ambition to do what only women can, to perpetuate and increase in physical numbers and strength the race to which we belong. It is not enough for us to be content with that That is not the happiness to which we have the right and the duty to aspire and to claim. Much less may we content ourselves with that selfish languor so often found in the harems of the rich. We have no right to expect others to make us happy while we do not unselfishly gird ourselves to make others happy and worthy of their place, as our life's chief aim. The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves, if we fail of attaining to happiness. Our men are seeing more clearly to-day than ever before that the welfare and success of our people in the coming years depend very greatly upon us, the mothers and daughters of our race. Emanci-

pation, education, elevation intellectually and morally—this is to be our cherished desire, our purpose. The question is not, 'Who will make us happy?' but 'How can we be most useful to our people and our fatherland?' "

It is highly significant that during the progress of the war another leader, Madame Halidè Hanum, was made Principal of a new college for the education of women established by the Government itself on a Moslem basis at Beirut. Yet when the women began to act on their progressive policy and to discard the veil, it was the religious forces of Islam that raised a stern hand of disapproval and ordered the resumption of the veil. The cross currents of progress and reaction are thus working in perplexed and tumultuous conflict.

When we set these bright shoots of new vitality against the desolate background of the life of Nearer Asia the mind is drawn into a tense concern for the future. To recall to mind the rich possessions of Nearer Asia, both in her manifold types of humanity and in the material resources of the land, and to contrast the splendid possibilities that they conjure up with the record of

decadence and destruction that makes up Turkish history, is to face one of the greatest human tragedies in the world.

And the riddle to which we crave an answer is—Will that decadence continue in increasing cruelty and corruption, or will the new forces of progress lift the life to higher levels both of aspiration and attainment?

Books for Further Reading.

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H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton, *Educational Reform in Turkey.* (*The East and The West,* April 1917.)

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Chapter VI

THE PEOPLE OF THE CAMEL

I

THE life-blood of the Arab world flows outside the borders of Arabia.

"The Island-of-the-Arabs" the Arab geographers justly call their land, isolated as it is by the deserts on the north and by its three thousand five hundred miles of coast line from Basra round the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, to Port Said.[1] But the "Island" peninsula is set where the streams of the life of the three Continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe—meet. The three great cities of the Arab world, Damascus, Bagdad and Cairo, are all beyond the frontiers of Arabia. They are, so to speak, the ports to which the life of the Continents moves; Damascus for the world of the

[1] See Map.

Mediterranean and the North, Bagdad for Asia and Cairo for Africa. And to feel the true pulse of Arab life the finger must be placed in Syria upon Damascus.

The reasons for this lie chiefly in the nature of the land and of an animal. They are the physical geography of Arabia and the camel.

The barren peninsula, with its table-land of burning sands, studded with oases that are linked to one another by tenuous camel-routes, is a fruitful but poverty-stricken mother of men. She cannot support her children.

From the mountainous southern corners overlooking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Oman, the whole table-land slopes gently downward to the north-east, to the Syrian desert and the low-lying plains of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Of all the one million two hundred thousand square miles of Arabia lying thus between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, a full third is silent, stark, irredeemable desert; where sand and sun glare sullenly at one another, and across whose vast solitudes of black gravel and red sand no living thing moves. The rest of the land, for the most part, only supports men who wander with their flocks seeking the scanty grasses, the thorn bushes and

the cactus that fight a losing battle against the choking sand and withering sunshine.

There are, however, favoured districts, some inland like the fertile folds about Medina in the north-west, and others on the fringes of the south between the mountains and the sea, of which the chief are Oman and Yemen. In dim antiquity the Yemen was an opulent country even more fertile than it is now; and from the Yemen and Oman and the Hedjaz a vast traffic in spices and dates and other merchandise went on between Arabia and the outer world. Two great influences decreased this richness: the increasing dryness of the climate and the development in Phœnician days and still earlier of the use of shipping in competition with the all-land routes of the Arab and his camel. Both the Yemen and Oman are irrigated by the mountain streams. Settled life can be supported there with the hoe and the plough, not only on the narrow coastal plains but on the mountain sides down the wide fertile valleys that are terraced with shelves of earth buttressed by thick walls of stone masonry. These districts, the ancient home of that illustrious Arab, the Queen of Sheba, are *Arabia Felix*—but they are exceptional.

As a result of this poverty in produce, the Semites of Arabia have, all through recorded history, drifted in one unceasing stream of humanity from the tilted south-western rim of that sloping tableland, either to the fruitful plains of Mesopotamia, or across the Sinai Peninsula to the corn-fields of the Nile, or northward to the vine-clad, olive-bearing hills of Syria. The Arab has indeed served the world and made gain for himself less by his products than by his movements. By the aid of his supreme unique possession—the camel—the Arab has been the immemorial carrier of civilisation, the middleman of three continents and many seas. Grotesque, misshapen, woebegone creature of derision as the camel is when he cynically lumbers along the city streets of the East, he is superb as he swings scornfully over the blistering sand of the desert trails—a miraculous creation of tested cable and steel springs driven on by inexhaustible energy over impossible paths to a goal that is, when reached, only the starting-point for a new pilgrimage.

The Arab, leading his caravan of camels along the fragile yet enduring tracks of the desert, has through historic time spun the web of intercourse between East and West. The profound gorges of

the Cilician Gates through the Taurus and of the Khyber Pass into India have through historic time been filled with the gentle clamour of his camel-bells as he bore the products of the industry of Rome and Greece from the Ægean Sea, and of the Punjab from the Indus River, to Damascus and Babylon and Nineveh.

The whole marvellous gift of the Arab came home with a bewildering completeness on the days when I was travelling up from Tarsus through the great gorges of the Cilician Pass. During a single day I met upon that historic path over four hundred camels bearing the burdens of the West from the great Anatolian Plateau down to the Cilician Plain and Syria on to the East. They were striding down the road used by Alexander the Great, Cicero, Paul, and Haroun-al-Raschid. Before ever Alexander came the camels were swinging down that road through those gorges, and all through the revolutions and wars of five thousand years the Semite and his camel have been the enduring thread of civilisation.

The Arab baby, born in the open air behind some recumbent camel, is weaned on camel's milk, brought up on camel flesh and camel butter, is dressed in camel-hair fabrics, sleeps under a tent

of camel skin or cloth, and as a ten-year-old tends and rides the camel. The lore of the camel-track in the sand is the Arab boy's alphabet and grammar. All through life he looks to the camel caravan to bring across the desert all the luxuries and many of the necessities of life. To the Arab the camel is all and more than all that the steamship and the railway train, the cow, the sheep and the horse, the cotten plant, and bricks and mortar are to the civilisation of the west.

II

What then are the enduring characteristics of the Arab peoples?

The nomadic Arab tribes and confederations of tribes that wander over the land both in Arabia proper and in the territory between Bagdad and Damascus are the true Bedouin, and they retain the essential characteristics of the Arab of history. The tribe rather than the family is the unit of society. The blood-feud which prevails throughout the Arab world exacts blood for blood from the offending tribe. The law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is rooted deep in Arab ethics. Restless and passionate, bound by

pride of race to the ways of the past, a dashing fighter under command but normally a mediocre leader and general, the Arab has all the virtues and many of the shortcomings of the free-lance.

Living in tents under the patriarchal government of the sheikhs, they lead their sheep over the land in search of food and breed their herds of camels. Nothing, however, would be farther from the truth than to think of this simplicity as crude or as issuing in a life that lacks cultivated manners, shrewd political knowledge, wide interests and essential dignity.

For instance, a traveller starting to cross the Syrian desert from Bagdad to Damascus would pass through that great confederation of Arab tribes which occupies the land. He would at one stage of his journey find wandering herds of camels—the mothers and their colts feeding side by side as they roam the rolling plains. For hours he would ride through these scattered herds, the black low tents of the Arab herdsmen and their families becoming more and more numerous. At last, in the heart of the area, he would discover the central settlement of the tribe, in the middle of which in a large tent he would be greeted by the man whose word is absolute law to all the

men over those wide leagues of country, Sheikh Fahad Beg Ibn Hadhdhal, Lord of Anazah.

In that tent, carpeted with Persian rugs whose delicate and exquisitely blended colours are at once the model and the despair of the western artist and craftsman, the Sheikh, with his attendants and his favourite greyhound and falcon, would receive the traveller with the incommunicable and perfect courtesy of the Arab desert-king, a natural independence and dignity which never contemplates either the need for arrogant assertion of rank or the possibility of bowing before any power save that of Allah.

That Sheikh, however, is thoroughly different from, yet inter-dependent with the other great Arab type, the town dweller, the merchant of Damascus or Bagdad. Annually he will, as a camel-breeder, send his many hundreds both of burden and express camels to the metropolis for sale; while many scores of camels will come back laden with the coffee, the robes, the cutlery and the fire-arms that he and his tribe need through the year. In the meeting of that Sheikh and the others of his rank with the city merchant, Arab politics are shaped. "The people of the tent" never exchange places with "the people of the

wall," as the city dwellers are called. The desert-sheikh swears that he cannot breathe in Damascus; the commerce-prince would die under the exposure of the desert;—but in their inter-communication they make the Arab world. That is why the pulse of that world must be felt in Damascus.

Between these two great types are at least four other grades of Arab life.

In the heart of Arabia itself are the town and village dwellers who, in their remote and solitary settlements, surrounded both by desert and by the still more powerful invisible isolation of their exclusive religious faith, form one of the most secluded peoples of the world.

In the villages and towns of Turkey are settled Arabs, de-nationalised and corrupted by their environment. They have neither the simplicity and independence of the isolated people nor the cultivation of the civilised. They share both the ignorance of savagery and the soft dependence of civilisation.

Two further types of degenerate Arab, which shade (so to speak) into one another, are those who live a semi-nomad life on the borders of the settled districts—a kind of gipsy-Arab; and those

who have ceased to wander yet still live in tents and cultivate the soil.

It is impossible to define the characteristics of a people so varied in environment and in type except by a catalogue of contradictions. The issue is made still more complex by the curious blend of qualities that jostle within the personality of each individual man. Mean and haggling beyond description in his commercial dealings, the Arab is lavish without stint in his hospitality. His distrustful pride and quarrelsomeness are balanced by good-natured courtesy and great patience, and are lifted high by his personal courage and independence of spirit. Readiness to support a tissue of cheating and lying by a multitude of oaths is partially cancelled by a reliability even to death where the man's real faith is in pledge. And this good faith itself is founded paradoxically on a blend of honour and superstition. One general truth, however, seems to emerge, that the Arab is always most himself when living an active, nomadic, open-air life and tends to degenerate when placed in semi-dependent attachment to oriental city-life.

Almost universally sensuous, the Arab of the desert is a clean-living man compared with the

Meccan and other town-dwellers who wallow in unimaginable beastliness close by the very shrines of their faith.

To rob is with the true Arab a legitimate act having a high and almost chivalrous morality of its own. To exact blood for blood is engraved in brass on the Arab code of honour, which enjoins interminable blood-feuds that pass on from generation to generation.

Most Arabs are completely illiterate. There is no evidence that Mohammed could read or write a word. His dictated suras were only embodied in the Koran after his death. To-day the wisdom of the ages is handed down from father to son around the desert camp-fire. On the one hand this results in dogmatism and superstition; on the other hand it liberates life from the fatuous imbecility of the mind that is choked with ephemeral printed matter.

The Book of Job is a dramatic setting of inspired Arab thought. Its method of arriving at wisdom by meditative conversation, the reference for argumentative illustration to the skies and the seas and the beasts of the desert, the reverence before the majesty of a dimly realised Supreme Being, are all in the Arab manner.

Intellectually they are not inventive. But in philosophy they have adapted Aristotle to the needs of the Semitic mind; in mathematics and astronomy they have shown great capacity for patient and laborious work. They have a beautiful, flexible and subtle language. And their mystical quality of mind has defied even the cast-iron theism of Islam.

Blending as they do the endurance of the East with the restlessness of the West, and the meditative quality of Asia with the energetic shrewdness of Europe, the virile, independent children of Arabia stand in the front rank of the manhood of the world in physique and in brain. The true Arab is tall, finely proportioned, keen of eye and ear, with sinews of cable and nerves of steel. It is one of the mercies of history that, with all his gifts of body and mind and spirit, the Arab has in the long run always failed in organisation on a large scale. If that gift had been added to him, he might have ruled the world, as indeed he did rule it for that brief marvellous hour when he forgot his own blood-feuds in the passion for a single idea that drove him out to conquer the earth for Allah.

The difference between the life of the desert

and that of the town, and the resultant difference in personal characteristics is very marked among Arab women. The veil and the harem of Islam seclude the women in the towns; but in the tent life of the desert they are far freer. In both, however, their horizon of ideas is limited; their mental power is stunted; their position is one of subjection. In the desert they are worked hard, the men taking little part in the labour of the camp save the care of the camels. In the towns the women of the poor work hard; the wives of the rich live in a demoralising hot-house atmosphere of seclusion in which there is but little play for the wholesome functions of the spirit or mind or body.

The proverbs and the poetry of the Arab are full of declamations against the morals and every other quality of woman save her physical beauty, which is created for the delight, though often for the destruction, of man. In numbering population women are not counted. Divorce is rampant, especially among the Bedouin; while polygamy, on the other hand, is more common in the towns than among the tents.

If it is asked—as it may well be—why a race that in inherent power of mind and of body ranks

so high among mankind has yet failed to attain any real unity or power, one element in the answer certainly lies in the fact that woman is the wounded wing of Arab life. The whole moral attitude of Islam to woman makes her, through her lop-sided personality—which is developed sensuously but stunted mentally and socially—a permanent drag on the progress of the Arab race. The nation cannot rise with her as she is, and it cannot move without her.

A second stumbling block to the Arab has been the whole policy of Turkish government, which has by ingeniously hampering restrictions made all domestic initiative within the Arabic peoples almost impossible. Should the Arab attempt to improve his land the only result, under the Turk, has been a new raid on his purse by the rapacious government tax-collector. Behind both of these causes of weakness lies the influence of Islam which, with all its superficial appeal to the virile in manhood, does not, in fact, develop an all-round restrained humanity, but rather stereotypes and sanctions the normal weaknesses of the Arab man. Islam is also essentially rigid, without any permanent, inherent principle of progress.[1]

[1] See Chapter IV.

III

The Arab, however, has still intact rich possibilities. He has for certainly four thousand years and probably for a longer period wandered from his home to Asia and Africa mingling with the Chinese, the Indian, the Turk, the Greek, the Jew and the African. He has inter-married with most of these peoples; yet he has throughout kept his racial identity unbroken and essentially without alloy. During those forty centuries a score of emperors and kings from Persia, Assyria and Babylonia, from Greece and Rome, Constantinople and Egypt, have fought with and attempted to oppress him; but he has remained to this day untamable and independent. He has often been beaten in battle, but never conquered. No yoke has yet been fitted to his shoulders; no religion or civilisation has been able to corrode his elemental powers.

He has stood aloof from the world but is becoming, in the clash of world races, more and more conscious of his own racial unity and its qualities.

His leaders begin to-day to dream of a Pan-

Arabian programme that shall somehow unify the scattered tribes that lie under French and British protectorates in Africa and in Aden, in Mesopotamia, and under ineffective yet cramping Turkish control in Syria and Cilicia. That programme is necessarily vague, but it springs from a desire for a fuller life that will more completely realise the great possibilities that lie concealed within the Arab race.

Yet, among all those rich powers that lie dormant in the Arab, the deepest and fullest is his capacity to undertake great adventure for God. Throughout all history the great figures of the Arab race have been those who did heroic acts and made venture of all for a Faith. From the Arab Abram in the Chaldee country, who heard the clear call and became for all time the supreme type of unwavering loyalty to the leading of the invisible God, through Mohammed, whose flame of enthusiasm for Allah won incredible victories, to the very slave-traders, whose journeys carried the Crescent through the forests of Africa to her central lakes, the Arab has proved himself to have an astonishing natural genius for propagating his faith. It is for this reason that although the web of Arab influence centres in Arabia, the tangled

threads, as has been shown, run out through the earth.

When Livingstone penetrated to the heart of Central Africa he found the Arab on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and Lake Moero, on the Shiré, down the Zambesi, and on the Congo. There the Arab was the chief cause of that "open sore of the world," the slave-trade, with its ghastly record of atrocity and its steady extermination of the African tribes. When Mackay in the heart of Uganda was throwing his strength into ending the king's atrocious cruelties, he found that the power that led the royal policy into the paths of massacre and torture and the destruction of the people was the menacing figure of the Arab trader. "Muscat," [1] wrote Mackay, "is in more senses than one the key to Central Africa." Mackay, as a man who was giving his life to bring the Kingdom of Heaven in Africa, pleaded for a strong missionary centre, not in Africa, but in Arabia. When Sir John Kirk at Zanzibar, the clearing-house of the East African slave-market, urged on the Sultan there the determined policy of Britain that the slave-trade in Africa should be ended, it was the Arab

[1] See Map.

who stiffened the resistance. It was in the heart of India, in Vizagapatam, that the distinguished Arab, Salat, through the reading of an Arabic New Testament, was led to accept Christ and then to proclaim Him, though stabbed by his own brother for surrendering the faith of Islam.

The wandering Arab can live and rear families in tropical countries where the European can never be more than a bird of passage. He knows little of racial antipathy. He can live alongside and inter-marry easily with the Indian and the Negro. He has established his race and his religion in China. He is more powerful and subtle in brain and in power of leadership than the African, the Malagasy, the South Sea Islander, or indeed than any of the primitive peoples. He, therefore, though less powerful politically than the white races of Europe and America, can by sheer intimacy influence the life of backward races as perhaps no other exterior invader can.

As a result, the future of Northern and much of West, Central and East Africa from Nigeria through Uganda and the Sudan, so far as the general level of life is concerned, is bound up with the condition of the Arab. Arab moral standards are penetrating the great island of

Madagascar and have their influence from Bombay to Singapore and the Malay States.

The Arab has thus proved himself to be a natural missionary force. He has during the last half century brought vast areas of Africa and parts of Madagascar under the Crescent. He is, by the sheer fact of his wanderings and of his witness, daily widening the sway of Islam. Under that banner he has decimated districts of Africa as a slave raider and is now leading the negro up a religious blind alley to a spiritual *impasse*. The Islamic Arab is thus the foe of progress.

Yet the adventurous, mobile and virile strength of the Arab placed at the service of Christ would certainly lead into His Kingdom not only his own great people but an increasing army of others in Asia and in Africa. The Arab would also interpret to the world that masculine and heroic element, that sterner quality in Christ which the Church in the West has tended to lose.

The ambitions and determinations that spring up in the heart and brain of a people of such splendid possibilities as the Arabs will certainly work themselves out into the field of the interracial politics of Nearer Asia and so of the world. Whether they work themselves out explosively in

rancour and discord, or constructively in co-operation and comity, is part of the riddle of the future of Nearer Asia.

His possession of these superb natural missionary qualities exercised in the interests of Islam challenges Christendom to bring him into the captivity of Christ, "Bridle of colts untamed," under whose divine Captaincy the Arab may carry along the immemorial tracks of his race the splendour of God and the leaven of His Kingdom.

Books for Further Reading.

S. M. Zwemer, *Arabia, the Cradle of Islam.* (Oliphant.)
The Arab of Mesopotamia. (Basra: Government Press.)
W. Ewing, *Arab and Druze at Home.* (Jack.)

Chapter VII

THE DISCIPLINE OF ISRAEL

I

"NEXT year in Jerusalem."

That expression of the hopeless yet unquenchable passion of the exiled race of the Jews is spoken by millions of lips and in every continent of the world each year as Passover is celebrated. Though the Jews live in every country in the world and owe political allegiance to every state, the fact that for them Jerusalem is spiritually and racially "home" makes the problem of their future as a race a central element in the riddle of the Nearer East.

"To-day," they seem to say, "we celebrate the immortal ritual of our Faith in Warsaw or Budapest, in Belgrade or Berlin, in Moscow, Vancouver, Johannesburg or London, in Shanghai or Bombay, in Sydney or in Rio—*Next year in Jerusalem.*"

That poignant formula of hope—uttered at that Feast each year through the centuries, sometimes dully as a mere form of words, sometimes with new springing hope, sometimes in rebellion against local persecution, but always in exile—sums up the tragic yet still uncompleted drama at once of the Jewish race and of the derelict land of Palestine.

The ritual of the Feast is itself a history of the suffering of the Jewish race. The bitter herbs on the Passover table symbolise the bitter slavery of their forefathers in Egypt. The paste of crushed fruits and vinegar recalls the mortar without which they were forced to build for Pharaoh. The whole festival commemorates for the Jew the divine leading and discipline of Israel by Jehovah through thirty centuries, in which not forty but some two thousand years have been spent in the wilderness.

The ritual of the Feast is the picture, the dramatic setting of an event in the remote past. But it is also the summary of a story of exile and oppression still running in unfinished serial form. Under each dreadful chapter is written "to be continued."

The interest of the Jewish scene in the world as

a whole and its supreme significance for the future of the Near East lie in the fact that for the first time a chapter is being written under which may be inscribed—not "to be continued" but "to be concluded in our next." A drama of which nearly all the previous acts have been tragedy is opening into scenes through which are now breaking unaccustomed gleams of light and prophecies of a glorious completion.

II

A modern young Jew looking forward to the future with the shrewd appraising eyes of his race would best grasp the meaning of the present tendencies by looking swiftly over the record of the past. He would see the divine discipline of Israel between the hammer and anvil of the Empires of Egypt and Assyria, Babylon and Greece, Persia and Rome (which we have watched in outline [1]) coming to a climax of severity within half a century of the Crucifixion.

When Titus in A.D. 70 drove the starving heroes of Jerusalem through the inner ramparts of defence till at last the Temple gates went down

[1] See Chapters I.-III.

with a crash and the sacrifices ceased, the ritual-heart of Judaism was pierced. For under the Law no sacrifice could or can be offered except in the Temple at Jerusalem. The priesthood, which was at the heart of Jewish life, existed to offer that sacrifice. When the Temple was burned, the active life of the priesthood therefore ceased and has never been restored.

The Roman power sixty-five years later, by a frightful holocaust in which hundreds of thousands of Jews were slain, routed the Jewish rebellion of A.D. 135 under Barcochebas and destroyed Judaism as a political organism. Most of the survivors fled from the land. The Jewish State was thus wiped out of existence. Only an invincible and immortal core of life could have saved any nation or faith from annihilation under the succession of shattering blows that then smote Judaism.

A religion to which the Temple had been the centre of all sacrificial worship had now no Temple. A nation to which Jerusalem was more than any capital has ever been to any people had now not only no metropolis but no political life.

The ships of the Mediterranean and the roads of the Roman Empire were filled with fugitive

Jews, who fled to the Euphrates and the Tigris, to the Pillars of Hercules [1] and to every land between the Atlantic and Persia. In all those lands they joined up with the Jews of the Diaspora (the Dispersion) who had already left Palestine in earlier centuries.

From that great Dispersion in the first and second centuries till the end of the nineteenth century the life of the Jews has been a chequered story of outlawry, social ostracism, political oppression, commercial hostility and massacre, broken by times of tolerance and protective justice. Roman and Byzantine, Persian and Egyptian, Turk, Crusader and Tartar, all slew, starved, and oppressed the Jew. Yet all these powers at some time or other made juster and more humane conditions for the Jews—either from a sense of justice or enlightened self-interest. Such gleams of light came, for instance, under the rule of Justinian, Suleiman the Magnificent and Oliver Cromwell. The Middle Ages, by force of its merchant and craft guild system, and by the solidarity of the Christian Church, put the Jew outside the social and commercial pale, and therefore often beyond political protection. The one thing

[1] Gibraltar.

he could do was to lend money at usury, which was forbidden to the Christian.

Under those conditions Jewish history became one long strenuous and absorbing battle between two powerful forces, each of which has shown itself up till to-day to be invincible. Those warring forces are, on the one side, the ideals of isolation and of race purity, and, on the other, the attractive power of the surrounding life, the tendency to assimilation. The twentieth century finds those two forces wrestling with one another in a fiercer conflict than at any hour in history, the one for the preservation, the other for the destruction of the Jewish people as a separate race.

III

The modern young Jew would wonder how any people could survive such flames of persecution through two thousand years with no territory, no central government backed by civil authority, no common language, not even in the last analysis a racial unity.

By what power, he would ask, has my Jewish people not only survived through the centuries

but thriven, until now they are more numerous than at any time in their three thousand years of history?

The Jews (he would learn) survived, first of all because Judaism is not in essence a political state but a Law and a system of thought, both straight from God. A State is always founded on a human law administered over a certain territory from a certain centre which is called the government. Destroy the government, take away the territory, and the State is gone. The Jewish government was destroyed and the territory taken away; but the Law remained because the Lawgiver was immortal and His Kingship was independent of territory.

Immediately on the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews in the first and second centuries, Jewish life all over the Near East and throughout the Roman Empire, with wonderful flexibility and resource, grouped itself around the synagogue. In the synagogue the Law was read. Here the child was educated in the Law. Here the Law was developed, systematised and refined till a complete rule for every act of life was formulated in the Mishnah, which was studied, taught and interpreted by

the Rabbis. From the moment when a Jew woke, the whole day was regulated. How he should wash, dress, get his food, act at table, wash up his dishes, buy his vegetables and sell his sandals in the market, greet his neighbour, control his children, arrange his daughter's marriage, treat his wife,—from birth and circumcision till he composed himself for death, Jehovah's will was expressed for every act of life. It was the Rabbi who knew exactly what God's will was about lighting the fire on the Sabbath day, about divorcing his wife, about washing his hands, about killing his cattle for meat.

Judaism survived, then, by complete obedience to what it believed to be the detailed, stated will of God. The power of the Law was immensely reinforced by the clear ringing dogma of the Unity of God and by the ever-present hope on the horizon of the coming of the Kingdom of the Messiah. The system welded the Jews into such a unity that, though scattered over the whole earth, they were still one. And the centre of the whole system was the Law expounded by the Rabbis and enforced by the fear of the anger of Jehovah and by the desire to win His approbation.

THE GREAT MOSQUE (DAMASCUS)
THAT WAS ONCE A BYZANTINE CATHEDRAL

The strength of such a system lies in its unbending rigidity. Its benefit lies in its gift of unity within the fold of the Faithful. Its perils, however, are as obvious as the benefits. The glow and glory of prophecy, all the moral ardour, the spiritual mountain heights and spaciousness of an Isaiah or a Hosea are lost. Life is largely spent on the flat road of a legalistic formalism running between fences of soul-cramping precepts that keep out the free winds of God's authentic voice. The mountain ranges of God's righteousness and love are hidden by the thickset hedge of formulæ.

A still deeper peril lies hidden under the supreme glory of Judaism. Its glory is that its Law hails from God Himself. But when a God-given Law is reduced to a myriad petty rules of external behaviour enforced by rigidly-minded Rabbis under penalties of divine anger against disobedience, a cramping tyranny is created. There is no oppression in the world that is more dreadful than the despotism of the synagogue among an ignorant people, for it is a tyranny over soul and mind as well as the body.

The Jews achieved that obedience to the Law because the Law was part of a Jewish culture in

which all Jews were steeped. That special exclusive Jewish teaching was drilled into the mind of youth and no other thought was permitted to penetrate. This educational process is the true core of Jewish unity.

All through the Middle Ages in the isolation of the Ghetti, the Jews ran their own schools—the Chedarim—where the Rabbis drilled the male youth of the nation in the Old Testament, the legal system of the Talmud interpreting the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Law, and often the ritual of the Kabbala. No secular teaching was given in these schools. The whole range of knowledge that makes for intercourse in trade or social life was and is absolutely taboo in the Chedar type of school.

This teaching reinforced Jewish unity by the notion of special holiness. It lived on the special favour of Jehovah and His promise to restore the Jews to a glorious freedom and supremacy in Zion in the Golden Age that is to come when the Messiah appears—"Next year in Jerusalem."

The survival of the Jews, lastly, has been secured by the very force that has tried to destroy them—the force of persecution. Isolated by law in the Ghetti, whipped with the scorpions of

Mediæval Law, which denied them the ordinary rights of trading with Christians, the Jews were welded into a unity by the very blows that were aimed at their life. Even had they wished to lose their identity in the surrounding mass of Polish or Russian, Roumanian or Spanish life they could not have done so; for neither by marriage nor in trade, social intercourse or education could they mingle with the life around them.

This isolation has led to a defective view of the qualities and powers of the Jew on the part of Christendom as a whole. Men think of the Jew either as a money-lender of whom Shylock is the mediæval type, or a "crook" of whom Fagin is the modern example; at best as an honest but cringing pedlar or petty tradesman. Yet, to the Jews world civilisation owes among many others, Spinoza, the "God-intoxicated" philosopher; Mendelssohn, the wizard of music; Lombroso, the scientist of the human race; Emin Pasha and Vambery, the travellers and discoverers; Karl Marx, the philosophic father of socialism, and Ferdinand Lassalle, its most brilliant exponent, with their amazing opponent Lord Beaconsfield; and in our own day Baron Sonnino, the greatest figure in Italian politics, Brandes the lit-

terateur of Scandinavia and Bergson the greatest of contemporary philosophers.

IV

If, then, the ramparts of unity have been so powerful in the past, what force (our inquiring modern Jew would ask) can penetrate them? If the bulwarks of Law, built by Ezra and Nehemiah on the foundations laid by Moses, have endured through the centuries of exile and dispersion, have the Jews as a nation anything to fear?

The answer is that the separate existence of the race is threatened by a greater peril than has ever confronted it. The danger comes from a force that it has never as a whole experienced, the attractive force of liberal toleration. This dominating influence which exercises itself on the Jews in a thousand ways and with (to them) alarming and increasing results is the power of assimilation by environment, and the chief organ of that influence is modern education.

Judaism, which was merely driven back on itself by persecution and isolation, is now coming under the daily influence of the whole spirit and character of the life of the world at large. Social

life, education, the daily paper, the novel, the drama and buisness life are crumbling away the aged walls of Jewry.

The Jew, who through the Middle Ages was almost everywhere up till the time of the French Revolution and the Industrial Age isolated in his Ghetto and was tied down chiefly to money-lending, is now being brought out into the full stream of life. The coming of capitalism and competitive trade to replace the old Guild system (which was neither capitalistic nor competitive and was closely related to the Church) has thrown the normal, commercial life of to-day open to the Jew. And the fact that the Mediæval Church, by declaring money-lending un-Christian, created a Jewish organisation of international money exchange, has tended to throw the power of the new international finance (and thus the issue of war and peace and of national and imperial development) into Jewish hands.

The movement that is taking place is like the outflow of the waters of a vast lake in remote highlands along a river channel that broadens continuously, and blends tributary waters with those from the lake, until at last the stream is lost in the sea.

Roughly speaking, the millions of Jews in Poland, Russia and Roumania, who have been isolated up till the war within the Pale [1] and in the Ghetti of the cities, form that highland lake of Judaism. From that lake a great and increasing stream of emigration has been flowing. This stream flooded its banks during the later emigrations of the nineteenth century following the Russo-Turkish war, when one of the fiercest persecutions in the world's history was visited by Russia on the Jews.

The stream has flowed from those persecuted areas of Eastern Europe to the open seas of Western Europe and America. As the eye follows the flow of that river of humanity from the lake till it is lost in the sea of the nations, four distinct phases can be caught, though each slides imperceptibly into the other.

At the one end is the primitive untouched traditional Jew to whom the Talmud is the beginning and end of knowledge. He swarms in Russia, Galicia, Morocco and Asia Minor to the number of over six millions, or a half of the entire world population of Jews. He speaks Yiddish

[1] The defined territory where alone (till 1916) they were allowed to live in Russia.

(which is a jargon of Hebrew and German) or Spaniolisch (which is a jargon of Hebrew and Spanish with Turkish and Arabic elements). He lives entirely under the old Jewish law expounded by Rabbis. He wears the side locks and the gaberdine of the historic European Jew. He is poor, a pedlar or an artisan with a large family. His children are educated in the Chedarim, those elementary purely Jewish schools in which all the teaching is on the ancient memorising lines of the Bible and the Talmud, and from which all other literature and all science are rigidly excluded.

The son of such a Jew moves out from his Ghetto and his land. He travels, say, from Warsaw to Berlin or even to London or New York. He carries us a stage farther down the stream. We find some three millions of Jews, spread all over the world but more largely concentrated in the cities of Middle Europe, who speak not only the Jargon but also the language of the country in which they live. They have discarded the gaberdine and the side locks for the dress of the normal cosmopolitan world. They still share in the Jewish ritual, attending synagogue and joining in the festivals of the nation; but they read the literature of the world around them and are interested

in the general life. They are traders, small professional men with medium incomes and moderately large families. The children go to Jewish schools—not the Chedarim, but schools in which the ordinary secular teaching of literature and geography proceeds side by side with the special Jewish religious training.

The children of these middle Jews are swept swiftly down the national river to a third stage. They ignore the ritual of Judaism but they still put in festival attendances at synagogue and still marry within the Jewish fold. Their children are educated in the ordinary schools of the country in which they live. They are business men and professional men, the bourgeoisie of Western Europe and America. They number roughly some two millions.

How wide is the separation between them and the "reservoir" is dramatically revealed in the scene in Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto,* in which the dying grandfather, whose only language is the Yiddish jargon, and the boy, whose only language is English and who has come to see the old patriarch in his last hours, are unable even to speak to one another through sheer ignorance of each other's language.

The children of these bourgeois Jews enter the last reach of the river of Judaism before its waters are lost in the sea of assimilation. They marry Christian wives and husbands; their children more frequently than not are baptised into the Christian Church. They receive a public school and university education. Their reading and social life as a whole is that of the country in which they live. They are well-to-do, and they have small families.

The young Jew of the twentieth century who has thus contemplated the long record of his race sees Jewry, to all appearance, now moving irresistibly with increasing momentum to be swamped in an ocean of humanity.

He sees, furthermore, that the war threw his race with all the other peoples of the world into the crucible. Well over a million of the thirteen and a half millions of Jews in the world entered the armies on one side or the other. There they lived under conditions where the ritual, the social life, the whole environment of Jewry were completely absent, except in the special Jewish regiments which created an organised Jewish military force for practically the first time since A.D. 135. Far more momentous still, the

Revolution in Russia like a vast volcanic upheaval burst the mountain barriers of the lake which has been the enormous reservoir of primitive Jewry. The Russian Pale was swept away in 1916. The epoch-making result was that over six million Jews, a half of the entire race, were liberated. The Ghetti of Eastern Europe are in process of destruction. The liberation of the Jews is thus for the first time in history a practically universal political fact. The Jews welcome this tremendous event with glad hearts; but official Judaism, the central Rabbinical core of the nation, dreads its effects. Their last barrier is down. After many centuries of protection by isolation they are now out in the full trade winds and currents of the world's life. Liberation for the Jews seems ultimately to mean the dissolution of Judaism.

Yet the Jew—even our typical modern Jew, who looks out on this revolutionised world with new eyes—feels convinced that if there is any meaning in history his race has still, as it has always had, an individual and valuable contribution to make to the life of the world.

Nationality like personality is an indestructible and precious reality. The Jewish people must in

the future as in the past have priceless offerings to place in the treasure-house of humanity.

Yet the Jew sees his race apparently gliding irresistibly into the national life of America and of Europe to be absorbed by world civilisation, just as the Jewish youth has been enrolled in the contesting armies.

V

What is to be the issue? It is the riddle of the Sphinx; the most impenetrable, indecipherable secret that the future of the nations of the world still hides.

It is, first of all, certain that the Jews will be drawn to identify their interests more and more with the nations in whose territory they live.[1] Only by such national identification can Judaism avoid producing violent reactions against itself. For the root cause of the persecution of the Jew through the ages has been the deep ground-swell of distrust and often of positive fear felt by any nation against the presence within itself of a

[1] It is significant that the most powerful exponent of modern Turkish nationalism, Tekin Alp, the author of *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal,* is a Macedonian Jew.

body whose ideals are different, a body at best only half belonging to the nation in which it lives, a body like the Jews of unyielding will, flexible in method, subtle and inventive in mind, pertinaciously amassing hidden power in secret ways for unknown ends.

In line with this thought is the widely held view that the Jew must accept liberation and membership of different nations but must develop his own particular culture and thought. The classical expression of this view was made at the conference of Rabbis in Philadelphia in 1869, when they agreed that "The Messianic aim of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish State under a descendant of David, involving a second separation from the nations of the earth, but the union of all the children of God in a confession of the unity of God so as to realise the unity of all rational creatures and their call to moral sanctification."

The normal criticism of that view is that the tide of all modern life sets so strongly towards assimilation that along that line Judaism could not survive.

On the other hand, a great and growing body of Jewish opinion has arrived at the conviction

that nothing short of a national territorial home in Palestine for the Jewish people will prevent the extinction of the race. Neither the Jewish religion nor its literature nor its law—all three of which are practically one—can alone (it is held) withstand the ceaseless erosion by the waves of contemporary civilisation. Yet if a Jewish State were established in Palestine, the twelve millions of Jews who live as citizens of other States in other lands would either cease to be technically and nationally Jews (seeing that they are German or British or Russian) or would become naturalised to the Jewish State and at once become foreigners in the land of their birth.

There is a movement, however, which aims at avoiding all these difficulties and yet achieving the end of preserving the Nation. All through the nineteenth century and on to our own day a movement has developed for the colonisation of Palestine (particularly of parts of Judæa, Samaria and Galilee) by Jews. The movement was stimulated partly by the inrush of refugees from Russia and Roumania in the 'sixties of the nineteenth century, partly by the movement against assimilation stimulated by progressive Jewish leaders in Europe and America. In 1880 just before the

new emigration there were some 25,000 Jews in Palestine; when war broke out in 1914 there were over 120,000.

During that period between forty and fifty Jewish agricultural colonies have grown up in the land; some of them (and those the most representative) have been extraordinarily successful. They have had local "Home Rule" within their own boundaries while paying a tax to the Ottoman Government. They reveal the fact that with due stimulus a very large extension of this method of colonisation is possible, giving homes and healthy life to many hundreds of thousands of Jews and bringing a new prosperity to the desolate hills of Judæa and the plains by the sea. In all such plans for settlement the rights of the Syrian, Arab and other populations now holding much of the land have to be strictly held in mind.

Simultaneously the old poverty-stricken, pauperised Jews of Jerusalem, dependent on and largely demoralised by the bounty of the Jews of Europe and America, have witnessed the growth of a great Jewish suburb of Jerusalem subdivided into national sections, such as the Yemenite Jew from South Arabia, and the Jews from Russia, Germany, Roumania and so on.

This process of colonisation has been greatly stimulated by the growth of the Zionist movement, especially since 1895, when Herzl—the Austrian journalist and author of *The Jewish State*—began his brilliant advocacy. He held that there must either be a Jewish sovereign State or complete assimilation; and he advocated the Jewish State.

The Zionist position, as defined at the first Zionist Congress held in Basle on August 29, 1897, is as follows:—

> Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end: (1) The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonisation of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers. (2) The organisation and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country. (3) The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness. (4) Preparatory steps towards obtaining Government consent where necessary to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

Against this position are arrayed, on the one side, the more primitive Messianic Jews who hold

that it is blasphemous to attempt to move in this matter till the Messiah Himself comes and calls the Nation to its own; and, on the other side, the modernist non-religious Jew who has cancelled out the Messianic idea and therefore is not only prepared but usually anxious to remain in the nation in which he is born and resents the thought either of a separate state or (what would to him be exile) a return to Palestine.

The Zionist movement received an immense reinforcement in 1917 by the explicit declaration of sympathy by the British Government.

It ran:—

> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.[1]

The vital meaning of that statesmanlike and liberal document lies equally in its promises and its conditions. It seems to point to a great Jewish settlement in Palestine having local autonomy

[1] Letter from the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. A. J. Balfour, to Lord Rothschild, November 2, 1917.

in the area or areas allotted to it, but living under an international or national protectorate which would give freedom for natural growth to Jewish life and to the life of the Syrian, the Arab, and the other inhabitants of the land.

VI

There is, however, another vision of progress for the Jew which, so far from cutting across these two opposed views of Zionism and internationalism, really fulfils in a greater sense the deepest and most spiritual ideals of each. But this new progress if achieved would end for ever that exclusive official Judaism, that synagogal, semi-legal, semi-religious despotism of the Rabbi which reposes equally on immovable tradition and on ignorance. It is a vision of a Jewish people liberated from the Rabbinical leadership that has led it astray from the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah up till the present hour, the leadership that crucified Christ, stoned Stephen, hounded Paul out of Antioch, left him bleeding on the roadside at Lystra, engineered his arrest and his flogging at Philippi, plotted his assassination when he was sailing from Corinth to Jerusalem and dogged his

shackled footsteps to Rome and the executioner's block.

The anger of the Sanhedrin against Paul illuminates with a flaming light the whole issue. That rage was at once cold and furious, pursuing Paul relentlessly from city to city over sea and land, implacable and subtle and utterly unscrupulous as to the methods it employed and the instruments it used. It was so because Saul, the young Rabbi, had committed the crime—the unforgivable sin—of breaking down the age-long bulwark of official Jewish rulership, *and of breaking it down from within.*

Paul's crime was that he had accepted the fact of the Incarnation of God in Christ.

His argument, in his letters for instance to the Romans and to the Galatians, becomes luminous with meaning when we see it as one burning testimony that the official Jewish legal idea—the Law —was simply lost in the fact of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, the Son of God, the express image of the Father.

The Jewish people, like Paul, will reach their full place in the world when they stand where he stood and kneel where he knelt,—at the feet of the risen Christ. They will miss their high des-

tiny and lose their very existence as a people if they permanently deny Him.

It may be asked, however, whether a race that has resisted Him through the centuries will listen to His Good News to-day. But have they really resisted Him? Rather, is it not true to say that He has never reached them?

When Jesus spoke to the Jews by the Lake-side or in the city and the villages, "the common people heard Him gladly." It was from poor and simple Jews that He chose His leaders. It was the official religionists—the Scribes and Pharisees, the Priests and Rabbis—who fomented mob-hatred and engineered His death. And ever since then, the vast majority of Jews have been hedged round by the most exclusive education in the world, that of the Rabbinical school with its traditional subject matter and its memorising system in which the free intellect has no part. The voice of Christ has never penetrated their prison walls. To-day that prison-house of thought has been shattered by the earthquake of the Russian Revolution. The whole modern educational system will to-morrow prove to be the most potent enemy that official Judaism has ever faced.

The Jews will in the future be for the first time,

as a people, within reach of the sound of the Gospel, if the Church is faithful to its high calling.

But to the eternal shame of Christendom the policy of many Christian States in the past has associated the name of Christian with the knout, the ravisher and the prison cell, with cruel starvation, perpetual ostracism and with massacre.

The great enemy of Christianity, then, has been not only the official Jewish synagogal tyranny but the essential heathenism of Christian civilisation especially in a major part of its contact with the Jews. Christendom must purge its own heart and present Christ to the Jew not only on its lips but in its life.

If, however, the pure word of the Good News of God in Christ can go through the ranks of a Jewish people whose minds will be freed from the purely traditional legalism, but who will still retain the eternal verities enshrined in the Law and the Songs and Prophecies of the Old Testament, then Christ cannot but win His true throne as their and the world's Messiah.

It may even become true of that nation, as it was of the great individual Jew, Paul, that they shall, when they give allegiance to their and our Lord, become the great missionary people of the

world, and, "beginning at Jerusalem," use their noble qualities and powers of spirit and mind and body to lead the world into the fulness of the stature of the manhood of Christ.

BOOKS, ETC., FOR FURTHER READING.

The Book of Ezra.
The Book of Nehemiah.
The Epistles of St. Paul: especially to the Galatians and Romans.
"The Jews." (*Encyclopædia Britannica,* 11th Edition, Vol. 15.)
Fishberg, *The Jews: a Study of Race and Environment.* (The Walter Scott Publishing Co.)
Arthur Ruppin, *The Jews of To-day.* (G. Bell & Sons.)
Albert M. Hyamson, *Palestine: the Rebirth of an Ancient People.* (Sidgwick & Jackson.)
J. T. Webster, *The Jewish Situation.* (United Free Church of Scotland.)
Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice.*
George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda.*
Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto.*

Chapter VIII

NEARER ASIA AND THE WORLD

I

"WORLD history," Lord Bryce has said, "is tending to become one history!" [1]

In the year after the words were spoken they received the most colossal and tragic confirmation that history has ever given to any generalisation upon it. Three shots from a Browning pistol in a remote city between the Ægean and the Adriatic fired the explosive stuff of which modern civilisation was made and flung, not simply Europe, but Nearer Asia, America, Japan, China, India and all Africa into war. The world was broken up and thrown into the crucible.

World history was no longer "tending to become," but actually was one history.

Nearer Asia is now set at the centre of that

[1] Presidential Address at the International Congress of Historical Studies, April 3, 1913.

process of world history. Ambitions for the control of Nearer Asia were central among the passions that made the war. The courses of the tides of life in three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe, set increasingly toward her shores, and she appeals strongly to the imagination of America.

The streams of humanity will, in the years to come, flow in increasing volume toward her fields and rivers and cities. From the deserts of Arabia and the villages of India men are moved irresistibly toward the vacant plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris where immeasurable opportunities of progress and production open up. From the Jewries of Europe and America the tide sets toward the hills and sea-plains of Palestine and Syria. Asia Minor, once the granary of the world, will draw with the power of a vacuum the progressive agricultural organising talent of the West.

These streams will flow in upon Nearer Asia whether she wills it or not. In the old days of the adventurous Empires that conquered and governed Nearer Asia but left the normal life unchanged, it was true of the East that

> She let the legions thunder past,
> And plunged in thought again.

But to-day the legions do not thunder past. The West comes with its electric trams on the banks of the Abana and its cinemas on the Gulf of Smyrna; its printed periodicals and books; its sewing machines and electric light; its "wireless" news service; its disruptive ideas; all the moulding influences of its commercial and educational methods.

It comes to stay and to shape destiny and character. When I was in Beirut the cinema film "Quo Vadis" visited that city for a second time. The Moslem authorities strictly forbade any women to go to see it, because on its previous visit the film had so dangerously quickened their sympathies toward the persecuted Christians. Western civilisation has an irresistible, penetrating, disruptive influence that has been absent from any power that has ever affected the East. Even Hellenism only really touched the life of the educated in Asia. But the merest illiterate is brought under the sway of the civilisation that changes the habit of thought, the whole outlook, even the very tissue of domestic life.

The new and strange development, of which the aeroplane over Tarsus[1] was a herald and a

[1] See Prologue.

portent, is now beginning to drive the pulsating blood of humanity once more through the long closed arteries of the Near East.

Take a blank outline map that includes Europe, Asia and Africa, and mark on it Aleppo which in the fifteenth century was the great clearing house of commerce between East and West. Then trace upon it the great continental railway routes that have been laid and are planned. When the Channel Tunnel and the projected Bridge from Constantinople to Scutari are completed it will be possible to take a through carriage from Charing Cross through Berlin, Vienna, Belgrade and Constantinople *via* Aleppo to Bagdad and in a short time even to Bombay. A railway line has been run from Cairo across the Suez Canal and the Sinai desert into Palestine. When this is extended to join with the Damascus railway it will become possible to travel from Charing Cross to Cape Town by an all-land route, running through three Continents.

Progressive railway enterprise, driving its lines from Petrograd through Moscow southward, is making traffic across the Black Sea with the Bagdad Railway and Aleppo—which city is here again taken as the true natural centre of Nearer Asia.

From Petrograd the line of movement can thus flow to Cairo and Cape Town, or to Calcutta and Madras through an Indo-Gangetic route. But the vision of the railway engineer looks farther eastward across Central Asia, the roof of the World, *via* Bokhara to Shanghai and Canton, and over the seas to Tokio, Vancouver and San Francisco. So the line will surely run from Constantinople and from Aleppo through Bokhara, diverging southward to Bengal and Burma and the rich world of the Malay States, but holding the mainline eastward through the untapped resources of wealth in China, where the vastest coalfields and ironfields of the world lie almost untouched beneath the feet of the most multitudinous industrial population on the face of the earth—all to be linked up with Nearer Asia.

But the future holds more striking developments still within the dark folds of its garments. It is already and immediately possible to organise an aerial mail service from the capitals of Europe through Nearer Asia to India, which could be reached in three days from Paris; while the shadow of the aeroplane's wings could glide over the roofs of Hankow within a hundred hours of leaving Liverpool.

Aleppo then may well become at once the junction of the world-railways that link Shanghai and Cape Town with Petrograd and Madras, Paris and Singapore, and the central sorting office and clearing-house of an aerial mail-system from Vancouver, Canton, Tokio and Calcutta, to London, Rome, Cairo and Johannesburg.

The ebb of life away from the Near East to the ocean route, which has continued ever since Constantinople fell in 1453, is thus reversed. That stagnant backwater of the world becomes again a way through which the tides of human life are driven.

A single picture will serve to illustrate the issue. Crossing the Anatolian plateau of Asia Minor between Iconium[1] and Antioch-in-Pisidia[2] in 1914, I was reading a textbook of archæology, with the pages open at a reproduction of a papyrus drawing made about two thousand years before Christ. The drawing represented two oxen drawing a wooden plough guided by a man, behind whom walked another man with a pouch at his side sowing seed with his hand. I looked up from the book and saw, within fifty yards, two oxen pulling a wooden plough precisely similar

[1] Konia. [2] Yalovatch.

to that in the picture of four thousand years ago, with a man guiding the plough and behind him another sowing by hand with a gesture ridiculously like that of his prototype in the picture.

"The unchanging East" was the obvious phrase that leapt to the mind. But at the end of the day's journey I went into the waiting room of a station on the Bagdad Railway. The wall was dominated by a great illustrated advertisement of a modern petrol tractor-plough capable of turning up in a day as much land as the little plough would scratch in a month. That tractor stands as a symbol of the "unchanging East" being ploughed up by the insurgent industrial plough of the modern West. The shearing ploughshare of an aggressive commercial civilisation drives its furrows through the ancient soil of a decadent world.

Did ever richer soil await the sowing of a new harvest?

II

The whole of Nearer Asia stands, then, at the end of an epoch, on the tiptoe of expectation wondering what is to be her future. Western capi-

tal moves toward her. The tide of teeming Eastern humanity flows over her plains. And from her cities influences will flow back through humanity everywhere. She must both affect and be profoundly affected by the destinies of the human race. Isolation is gone. Nearer Asia is bound up for ever in the bundle of life with the whole world.

Her own people, her Turks and Armenians, Greeks and Arabs, Jews and Syrians, have, as we have seen,[1] rich capacities that have never been developed, yet have never in all the centuries of misrule and exploitation been destroyed.

Those capacities, like the seeds discovered in the mummy cases of Egypt, have survived centuries of darkness in the swathing-bands of despotism. How is the hidden germ of vitality within them to quicken and root and sprout and bear the full ear of corn for the feeding of humanity? Already here and there new shoots of life are budding. The movement of thought that threw into predominant power the Young Turk party; the thousands of graduates, either of western Universities or of Colleges in the Ottoman Empire established by western missionary enter-

[1] See Chapters V.-VII.

prise; the deep currents of life among women that have created personalities like the Pan-Turanian feminist Halidè Edib Hanum, and organisations like the Society for the Defence of Women's Rights; "the sound of a going in the tops of the trees" among the Jewish people; the wind of Pan-Arabianism blowing where it listeth across the deserts and over the plain of the Two Rivers; the unquenchable fire of Armenian nationalism; all these are evidences of vitality that can, if quickened and trained, recreate a new civilisation on the ruins of the past.

Reconstruction, however, cannot come if Nearer Asia is to trust to her own powers in themselves, or as guided by alien governments, or as made rich by modern commerce.

Looking back across history and testing the old oriental imperialisms of Egypt and Babylon, Assyria and Persia; the more Hellenistic Empires of Greece and Rome; the despotism of Islam exercised from Bagdad and from Constantinople, we find in none of them hope for humanity in Nearer Asia. Nor do we see any permanent good for the peoples in the development of any vast agricultural and industrial prosperity, organised on the principles of modern commercial develop-

ment. History gives no basis on which to build a belief in either government or commerce, diplomacy or education alone as a foundation for a brotherhood of humanity. In fact, history and biology unite in showing that no such foundation can be discovered in human nature. The secret of the reformation of human life lies deeper. Renaissance for the Near and Middle East, renewal of national as well as individual life, the reconstruction of a civilisation there in which order will reign without tyranny and freedom be exercised without anarchy, can only be founded on the growth of a changed, a new humanity. As Lord Bryce, looking forward to the future of the nations, has declared, on the basis of an experience of the influence of diplomacy, government and education that stretches over half a century and as a result of a lifelong and profound study of human history—"We need a change of heart in the peoples of the world."

The supreme need, then, that must be met if reconstruction and renewal are to come among the peoples of Nearer Asia and bring them into a free and ordered life is a *changed manhood, a moral leadership rooted in spiritual reality.*

III

If what is here said is true—*i.e.* if the reconstruction of Nearer Asia is in the long run bound up with the recreated powers of her own native populations, and if their powers will only be developed under a moral leadership—the future of that land will be moulded by those who can successfully shape that leadership.

How, then, can such a leadership be developed? It can only be built up on an education that trains and develops the will and that gives ideal aims to the intellect. The desired leaders can only be made by an evangelism and an education that will produce Christian character. For the kind of character that begets trust, and is able, therefore, to exercise leadership as none other can, is Christian character. This does not mean that no Moslem has some of the needed qualities, for Islam has its partial knowledge of God's character. Nor does it mean that all nominal Christians have those qualities, for to name Christ is not necessarily to obey His will or to be like Him. *It does mean, however, that in the school of Christ where justice, truth and mercy find their*

supreme expression, character reaches at once its most heroic heights and its most enduring strength. In Him we discover Man on the scale of God, a Leadership that brings into all truth and a Power that builds men up into the fulness of the stature of His divine manhood.

In a word, Christian education alone can give the leadership that will recreate Nearer Asia. And the facts of the Near East prove that such leadership can be so developed.

No man can go through Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor and assess the general level of character among the different races there, and then walk in the Campus of Robert College, at Constantinople, the International College at Smyrna or the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut, and talk with and watch the thousands of students enrolled at any given time by those Colleges without seeing the invisible Hand moulding and making man. Those splendid Universities, whose faculties of science and medicine, of engineering, history and law, are on the highest levels of western efficiency, hold out a Christian ideal of character to the youth of the Orient. Their students come from every race and religion and vilayet of the Turkish Empire as well as from Cyprus, from

the borders of Egypt, Greece and Russia. The students—Syrians, Turks, Armenians, Greeks and Negroes, Christians, orthodox Moslems, Bahais and Jews—are in daily contact with professors and teachers whose own lives are shaped in discipleship of Christ. That contact of personality with living Christianity slowly transforms the character by silent, indefinable yet irresistible influence, though in varying degrees and with unequal success.

"Every political and social leader in the Balkan States has found his training at Robert College," says Dr. Rendel Harris.[1] And what Robert College has been to the Balkan States and some parts of Asiatic Turkey, the Colleges at Smyrna and at Beirut, with their fellow-institutions, the Euphrates College at Harpoot and the colleges at Aintab and Marsovan, are to Nearer Asia. They form, as Dr. Rendel Harris has said, "a splendid combination of progressive methods of education with an earnest evangelical propaganda." No one can have the experience of speaking to the Y.M.C.A.'s of those great Colleges or the boys at St. Paul's Institute at Tarsus, without knowing that a new type of oriental

[1] Writing in 1915.

manhood is being created there in the atmosphere of an intellectually efficient, morally sound and spiritually sincere Christian education. The graduates, as teachers, preachers, journalists, judges, doctors, merchants and in all walks of life, exercise a really commanding influence.

Standing high up on the tower of the International College at Smyrna amid the meteorological instruments, I discovered that the Turkish Government at Smyrna was taking its diurnal time by electric signal from the College. That fact stood as a symbol and as a prophecy of the approaching hour when Nearer Asia will accept from those splendid Christian laboratories of character not simply their standard of time, but their moral and at last their spiritual standards at once of aspiration and attainment. The International College was able to set the standard of time because it had the most perfect instruments for observation of the heavens. It and its companions will similarly set the standards of moral and spiritual life for the Orient, because their human instruments know the will of Him to whom the heavens are but the work of His fingers, and whose being we see completely in the face of Jesus Christ.

As I travelled, again, through village after village of the plateau of Asia Minor with the Christian doctor who has established his hospital at Konia, and watched him with his colleagues at work in the district and in the hospital wards, I discovered that he and they had acquired an ascendancy of influence, an authority of personality that radiated over wide areas where their faces had never been seen. The power of the scalpel of the Christian surgeon and the healing services of the nurse, bathed in an atmosphere of passionate devotion to the Great Physician and of absolute obedience to His will, had literally broken the powers of darkness on the Anatolian plateau. It was written over every Moslem face in city or village, as I watched them when the Christian doctor came to them, that he had broken down with the batteries of skilled love the seemingly impregnable defences of Islamic arrogance and exclusiveness.

It was, again, a strange experience to climb over the roofs of booths in Damascus to that wonderful arch over the now closed entrance to the great Mosque that was once a Byzantine Christian cathedral and to see there over the arch in great Greek capital letters the inscription:

THY KINGDOM O CHRIST
IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM
AND THY DOMINION ENDURETH
THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS

and then to come down and walk right through Damascus along the street called "Straight" without meeting a single Christian.

Was the valiant inscription really true?

Then I discovered little by little that in all that city of Damascus, the most ancient city now standing in the world, there was one man who had universal authority, not by official position nor by wealth, but by the power of service and of personality. Even the wild untamable Arabs of the desert would come in and lie down with complete confidence on the operating table of Dr. Frank Mackinnon, saying, in the phrase that has become proverbial about that great Scottish Christian surgeon through the Arab world—"He carries a blessing in his hands." From that hospital, established by British missionary enterprise, at the very pulse of the Arab world, the invisible power of a conquering leadership in service radiates all along the camel-routes of Asia.

So it proved to be true after all, through that influence, that in Damascus Christ still exercises His dominion and is building His everlasting Kingdom on the rock of virile obedience and worship.

Nor could a man listen, as I did in Tarsus, to the burning eloquence of an Armenian preacher, aflame with devotion and with an intellect trained to the use of the best Western as well as Eastern thought, and watch the faces of the many hundreds of eager listeners as they gathered his message on the words "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," without realising that, after all, influence on character comes through the real presence of Christ in the midst as His apostles proclaim His Gospel. From the College in Tarsus every year a new group of trained preachers of the Good News of the Kingdom goes out to strengthen and to develop the Church among the Armenian populations.

In these ways, by teaching, healing and preaching, the beginning of a new leadership is being developed in Nearer Asia. The hearts of men are being changed, the foundations are being laid of a movement that may still come to realise in the

future in those areas the frustrated aims of St. Paul.

IV

It has been seen, however, that Nearer Asia is intimately bound up with the whole world; and that its rise or fall must profoundly affect and be influenced by the life of humanity in America and Africa, in Europe and in the Far East. We must look at the Near East in this tremendous context of the world of which it is a small part.

We discover no foundation for the hope of a brotherhood of free peoples in Nearer Asia, or indeed in the world at large, in the natural instincts of man acting on the plane of history. Imperialisms based on the desire for dominion, democracies rooted in the passion for universal comfort, and commercialism spreading by the desire for gain have each in them, it is true, sound germs of order, justice, freedom and of productive and distributive effort. But when they work themselves out on the plane of history along the lines of dominion or comfort or business efficiency, they work themselves out to destruction

—as the Great War has demonstrated to the world.

It is, after all, Isaiah and not Sennacherib, Paul and not Nero, the missionary statesman and not the company-promoter who stands for the true principle of progress.

After all, Paul was right when he adventured everything on a life crusade to change the hearts of men in order to save the world of his day. Paul was not only certain that the hearts of men must be changed, but that the one Power in the world capable of revolutionising human nature was the Power that on the road to Damascus had entirely transformed his own—had changed Saul, the incarnation of Pharisaic hate, into Paul the passionate apostle of universal love.

There is, indeed, only one standard for the future of Nearer Asia, so universal in its range, so complete as a solution of the evils that have oppressed man, that the Jew and the Greek, the Armenian and the Syrian, the Arab and the Indian, the invading European and American, the African and the Turk can find in it a final and unifying aim creating personal growth, national strength and united progress. That standard is

expressed in the programme of the world Kingdom of God.

Evil has been allowed to rule great areas of life; and the wage of that sin has been death—millions of graves on the battlefields of three continents and on the floor of the oceans of the world. The thinking world knows now that, if we are to move on at all and not sink into barbarism, we must have that rule of God in life. We must have trust in politics. We must have national and international world-commerce organised for the good of all and not for the gain of the few. We must have corporate fellowship and not hostile action as between rich and poor, buyer and seller, employer and employed, American and European, Asiatic and African. In a word, we must have the will of God organised in the common life of all peoples.

The question, after all, is not whether Christendom has failed either in the Near East or in the world at large, but whether Christianity has the power to succeed. Those who know Christ declare that on a world scale, as G. K. Chesterton has said, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, but has been found difficult and not tried."

The Christian idea of the Kingdom is that Christ should rule absolutely over all life. In fact Christianity only really works as a complete rule of life. Christ must be Lord of all if He is to be truly Lord at all. If we are to witness a world Kingdom of God, the whole Church must take the whole message of the Kingdom to the whole world. Christianity has the power to do that, for it rests on the power of Almighty God revealed perfectly in a living Christ. The Church has that power in the hour when it gives complete obedience to His will.

The final issue is joined. The last and greatest crusade is now opening its warfare. Evil has in our day flung itself in might against all the good that man has slowly wrought out in the life of the earth. The foundations must be laid afresh, and the walls of the City of God be built on such a spacious and enduring plan that they will encompass all men for all time.

Beyond the present there lie in the world unmeasured and immeasurable possibilities of good. We see dimly the hope of a world set free from selfish ambition and from fear, from national intrigue and racial antagonisms, a world to work

out on earth the divine idea of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The call is not to despair because wrong is rampant, but to establish, from Nearer Asia, where the Christian Faith was cradled, to the ends of the earth, a world-fraternity of all races, a universal Kingdom based on obedience to the sovereignty of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SOUTH WESTERN ASIA
with the
VALLEY OF THE NILE
English Miles
0 50 100 200 300 400
ENGLAND & WALES
on same scale as general map
Principal Railways
Principal Steamship Routes
Limit of River Navigation
BLACK SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Syrian Desert
Nefud or Dehna
Roba el Khali or Dehna
(Sandy Desert)
el Ahkaf Desert
Libyan Desert
Nubian Desert
Arabian Desert
Tropic of Cancer
PERSIAN GULF
RED SEA
ABYSSINIA
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